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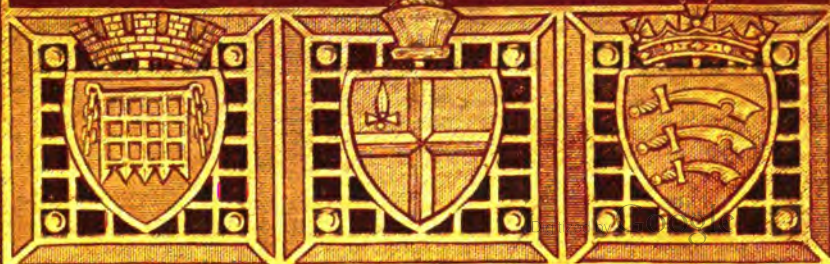
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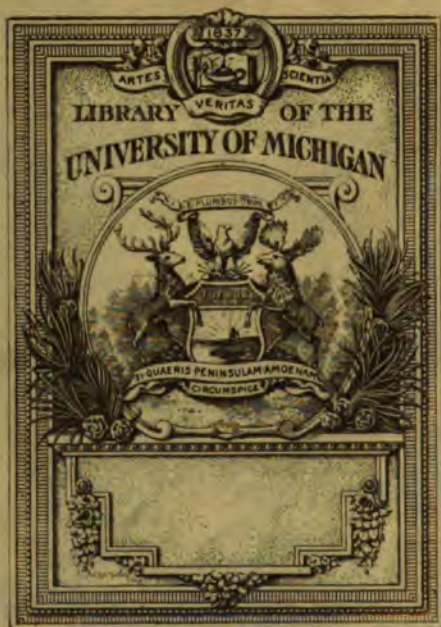
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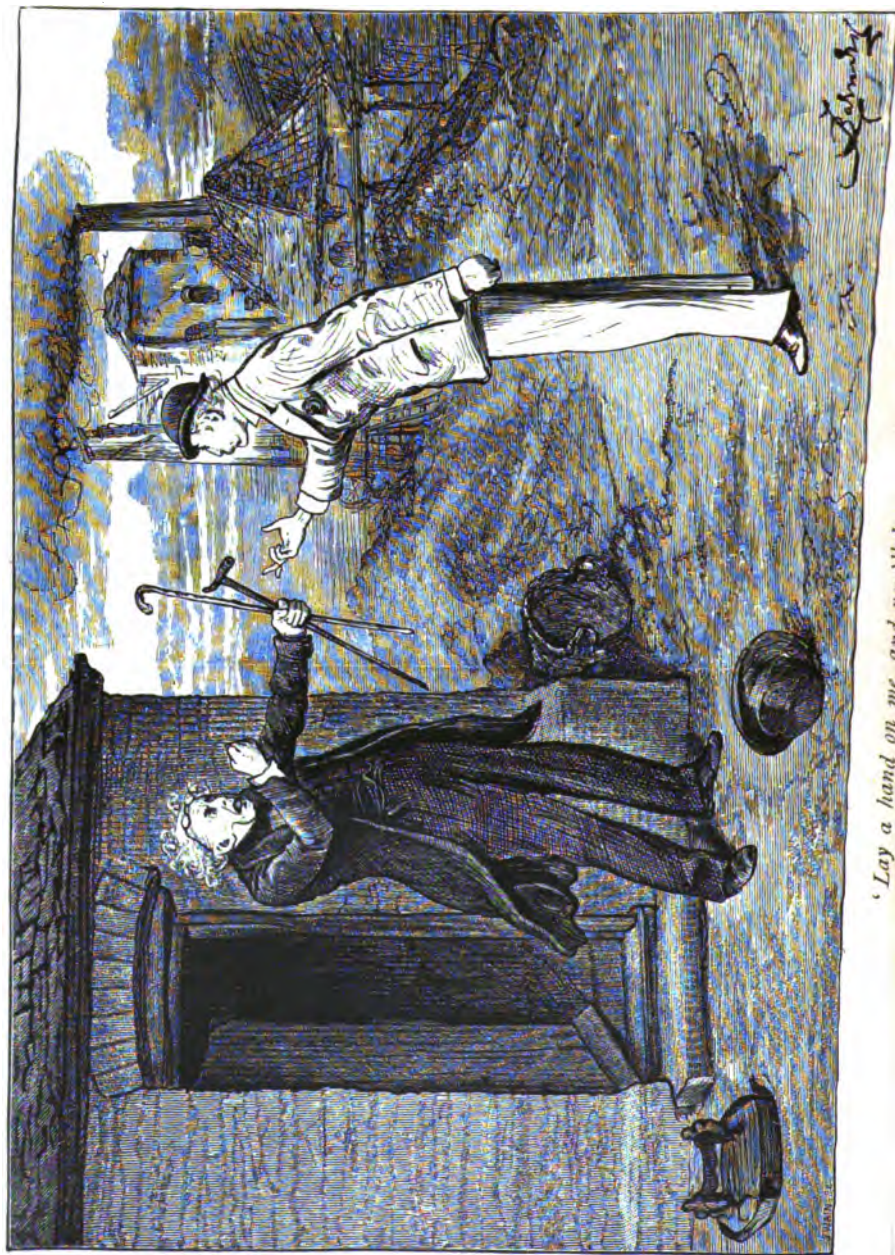






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'Lay a hand on me, and you'll be soon for it'





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# BELGRAVIA

AN

*Illustrated London Magazine*

VOL. XLVI.

*NOVEMBER 1881 TO FEBRUARY 1882*



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# BELGRAVIA

NOVEMBER 1881.

## Joseph's Coat.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

SO Joe went his way again and waited. Conveyancer Packmore and John Keen were in conference for a few hours with Dinah, and except for some merest formalities of law, the like of which any able young lawyer might readily invent if he desired it, the property of long errant Joe was at last in his wife's hands. John had his reasons for delay. There was surely a method of keeping Dinah in Joe's neighbourhood, since there was no method of getting Joe to keep in Dinah's. The young fellow consulted Sir Sydney Cheston, and found the baronet inclined to adopt impetuous action.

'A man might think,' said Sir Sydney, 'that the whole business was being carried out on the story-book principle, with an absolute necessity for filling three volumes out of it. The man wants to go back to his wife. There's no mortal doubt that she would be most happy to have him back. *We* want to see the whole thing settled and done with, and two good people happy; and yet we all go philandering about in this ridiculous and uncertain way. Let's bring 'em together, say who's who, and have done with it. They'd settle matters in five minutes, and their friends could go home and dine in peace.'

'I wish with all my heart it could be done,' said John. 'Shall we make a final representation to Mr. Bushell, and try to persuade him to some definite action? He is waiting now, though, to hear what Miss Donne says.'

'My dear fellow,' cried Cheston, 'it doesn't matter what Miss Donne says. Bushell *must* be on the spot to control that rascal of a son of his—infernally unlucky that he should be such a rascal,



isn't it?—and it's quixotic to talk about leaving a fortune such as his behind him. Why, that young blackguard would break his mother's heart and be off with the money in a year. In short,' said Cheston decisively, 'if Joe won't move, I'll tell his wife he's here, and bring her over to him.'

But John, who naturally attached great weight to Ethel's desires in the matter, though he dissented from her estimate of Joe, fought against this rough-and-ready method. He advanced Joe's own expressed desire to remain unknown; he represented how they had both pledged their honour not to reveal his secret; and, in brief, he left the Baronet convinced, and out of temper, as men convinced against their will are apt to be.

Before this, by some means or other, the story of the late transfer of old Joe's property to his lost son's wife was in everybody's mouth. Whether Mrs. Bullus had listened, or Conveyancer Packmore had leaked, which seems improbable, or Cheston had been indiscreet, nobody seemed to know; but the secret was no secret, and the hidden marriage of so long ago was common talk. But there was no hint of old George's criminality in the gossip, nor of Dinah's real relationship to young George; though, by the way, it was settled once by a learned legal tribunal, according to Lawrence Sterne, I fancy, that a mother and her son are not related to each other. Dinah knew that her business was known, and shrank within herself, and longed to get away. The local papers had paragraphs and 'leaderettes' about it, exalting that magnanimous morality on old George's part which forbade him from fighting the case.

'I suppose,' said the Baronet, still a little out of humour, 'that there can't be any objection to my calling on Miss Donne? I might see Mrs. Bushell, and I might learn if anything had been done.'

'Pray be discreet,' said John.

'I'll be discreet enough,' Cheston answered brusquely. 'But somebody must move in the matter, and if nobody else will, I will.'

'Miss Donne may not yet have had time to carry out her promise,' urged John.

'Then she'll have to find time,' said the other, not being in love with the young lady, 'and do it pretty quickly.'

Sir Sydney Cheston got into his carriage instead of the usual dog-cart, lit his meerschaum, and drove, unattended as was his wont, to the hotel in which Dinah and Miss Donne were quartered. This lonely drive, which lasted an hour, gave the noisy, good-

hearted gentleman a chance to think, and he was no sooner arrived than he put his thoughts into practice.

'They'll say all manner of things,' said he to himself. 'They'll say I want to marry a publican's daughter because she's got a quarter of a million of money; and a very good reason that would be, if I wanted to do it. They'll find out all on a sudden that they always noticed a tendency in me to make friends with moneyed people. I always worshipped the mammon of un-righteousness, they'll say at Wesley Chapel. Let 'em say what they like. A good conscience, Syd, my boy! Eh?'

He sent in his card, and was received, and fell to talk with Miss Donne in his own boisterous way, and suddenly blurted out an invitation to Worley Hall, which took both women by surprise. They declined with thanks, looking at each other, but the refusal was feeble. Sir Sydney was a baronet, and very much looked up to in those parts, and they had both been inclined to regard him as a man who had his own way in all things; and, indeed, he had in most.

'My sister will take care of you both, and you know, Miss Banks—beg your pardon—very ridiculous—Mrs. Bushell—for I was just going to speak of your husband; poor Joe was my dearest chum once upon a time; and, in short, ladies, I am here with a purpose, and I'm not in a humour to take a refusal, and I shall be more hurt than I can say if I meet one.'

He actually took things into his own hands; rang the bell, demanded the manager, informed him that the ladies were going to stay with him at Worley Hall, and instructed him to send their belongings after them. He lunched with them by his own invitation, and carried them triumphantly away with him, having prepared his sister by a telegraphic message. They had no more power against him than they might have against a whirlwind, and they submitted with inward tremors.

'You see, Miss Donne,' said Cheston at his earliest opportunity, 'that the people about here are saying all manner of unworthy things about your friend, Mrs. Bushell. Now, let me hear 'em saying anything about a guest of mine!'

Errant Joe's wife, lifted suddenly into fame, was naturally found no better than she should be. Curious, how impossible it is to have one's name public property, and escape lies.

Ethel shrewdly suspected his real purpose, but dared not say so. She began to see that she was not to have her own way without interruption, or at least began to guess as much, and she trembled anew for Dinah, yet could say nothing to prepare her. Both the

younger and the elder woman were ill at ease in their new quarters, though for diverse reasons. Dinah was oppressed by the majesty of the place, and found no joy at being waited on at dinner by liveried menials, who brought her strange dishes. Sir Sydney's maiden sister was kind and curious, but Dinah had no heart to talk of her own affairs to anybody but Ethel. Elderly Miss Cheston pronounced enthusiastically upon Miss Donne, whom she had always admired, though hitherto chiefly at a distance.

'Not at all countryfied,' said Miss Cheston to her brother; 'not rustic in the least. Quite a lady. No *mauvaise honte* about her.'

To this Sir Sydney agreed with a pre-occupied air, being engaged with the ripening of his own benevolent plans. His sister, who was perforce acquainted with them, thought it all deliciously romantic, and waited for the *dénouement* with much anxiety.

'You'll keep a still tongue till it's all over, Dorothea,' said Sir Sydney.

'My dear Sydney,' said the maiden sister, 'can you doubt me?'

Cheston made no answer to this appeal, but went back to his plotting.

At that moment Ethel and Dinah were closeted together, and the younger woman fancying that she saw the inevitable coming, led the talk to the topic the widowed wife most loved. Dinah told the old story over again: how tried Joe had been, and how valiantly he had gone away, and how he had never again been heard of. A few tears fell, but the story was ancient now.

'It's very strange to think of, Dinah,' said Ethel, steeling herself. 'If he were alive, and you were to meet, you might not know each other.'

Dinah disbelieved. She saw the fresh-coloured youngster in the garments of six-and-twenty years ago, his long hair worn in the fashion of that bygone day, the callow bit of whisker on his cheek, his clear front, his blue eyes. Time made no difference to him. She would know him, yes, amongst ten thousand! She said so, as she wiped her eyes, and took up her lace-work again.

'He would be changed,' persisted Ethel. 'We all change in less than six-and-twenty years, dear. If he were still alive, and if you saw him, you wouldn't know him. If you and I parted to-day, and met no more for all that time, do you think you would know me? I should be an old woman.'

Dinah shook her head with a mild showery smile.

'A woman doesn't forget her husband, my dear,' she answered. 'No, no. And the father of her child, and all! You don't know what it is, my darlin'.'

'I wonder how it would feel, Dinah,' said Ethel, 'if one were married, and one's husband went away, and came back again after so long an absence.'

'Why, what makes you talk of that?' cried Dinah.

'I was always fanciful,' answered Ethel. 'But don't you think it would be terrible rather than happy, after such a time?'

'No,' said Dinah. 'Not if he was to come back cold from his grave, poor thing. Do you think anything could make Joe terrible to me, my dear? I've laid awake many an' many a time, prayin' to see his poor ghost, if it wasn't wicked to ask such a thing. You'll think me a foolish woman perhaps, my dear,' continued Dinah with a smile more tearful than before, 'but if I knowed he'd stayed away o' purpose, an' was alive now anywhere, I'd march there barefoot an' ask him to let me see him now an' then. I think it's God as puts such feelings in a woman's heart when she marries a man and has children by him. I don't think anybody else has such thoughts.'

'Dinah,' cried Ethel, throwing her arms about her friend's neck, 'you are the best woman in the world.'

'No, my dear,' answered Dinah, kissing her. 'If you marry and have children, you'll know what I mean.'

There was surely no need to probe Dinah's heart further than this, and it was only too clear that when errant Joe came back again his wife would have forgiveness and a welcome for him. But—Ethel vowed inwardly, and with a grand flush of anticipatory wrath—when the man came back and misbehaved himself, he should repent any suffering he might bring to Dinah. He should suffer in return, and should be ashamed of himself, if any possibility of shame lay in him.

It was night-time when this conversation was begun, and it was late when the talk to which it led was over. Dinah dreamed of Joe that night, and saw him as he used to be, and at the close of the dream she awoke.

'Not know you, my life's darlin'!' she cried to herself, reaching out her arms in the darkness. 'Always yours, Joe; always yours!'

And so, with no guess that the life-long truant was so near, she wept herself back to her dreams again. Sleep, faithful lover, sleep and dream happily! Live a little while in the past, and be glad in it!

Early in the morning Cheston, with his brown beard blowing back in the free air and his shoulders squared resolutely, turned the slashing bay mare in the direction of the Buzzard, and made good speed to Mr. Bowker's cottage. Joe was at the mine, and



the Baronet, leaving his horse in the care of Mr. Bowker's eldest son, walked off to find him. Seeing him at the pit's mouth in company with one or two miners, he called him and led the way into the offices.

'I suppose,' he said with a laugh, 'that now this business is over you've no desire to keep on mining. Eh?'

'I don't know,' said Joe a little drearily, 'it's interesting work, rather.'

'Pooh!' said the Baronet. 'I've come over to take you back with me. You've had enough of this. The reason for which you came here exists no longer.'

'Cheston!' said Joe, paling somewhat as he spoke. 'You mean well, but you mustn't trap me. I know who is staying at Worley Hall with you!'

'The deuce you do!' cried Cheston, his countenance falling.

'Young Keen went over to see her last night,' said Joe, 'and they told him at the hotel where they had gone to. No, Cheston, let things take their course for a while, and give me time to think.'

'Now, look here, Joe,' said Cheston, laying both hands on his old chum's shoulders and shaking him to and fro a little, 'there's something in the Bible about the kisses of an enemy being deceitful, and the wounds of a friend faithful. It's a true word, if ever one was written. How about that lad of yours? Are you going to let him play the devil with his mother's heart and your fortune, or are you going to step forward like a man, and say, "Here am I, Joe Bushell, come to life again, and going to try to do my duty, and keep things square!" Now, which is it to be, Joe? Tell me.'

'I have a present hold upon the lad, Cheston,' urged Joe. 'I have told him that if he misbehaves himself I won't stand by and see it. I could go in and stop any extravagances of his with a word.'

'Listen to me, now,' cried the Baronet grimly. 'If Mahomet won't come to the mountain, the mountain will have to travel to Mahomet. If you won't come to your wife, your wife shall come to you.'

'Have a little patience with me,' said Joe. 'I don't want to distress her. Let me hear what Miss Donne says before we do anything.'

'Hang Miss Donne!' said Cheston ungallantly. 'No,' he added, laughing, 'don't hang Miss Donne. She is a very charming young woman, and a good one, or I'm no judge of characters. But now—will you come? Yes or No?'

'Not until I know that my coming mayn't be a downright horror to her, Cheston. Not until she's prepared a little——'

'And half dies of expecting you before she sees you!' interjected Cheston, laying his hands on Joe's shoulders again, and once more rocking him to and fro. 'The wounds of a friend are faithful. Remember that if I hurt you, old man. You're the same irresolute Joe Bushell as of old. The same irresolute Joe Bushell who couldn't find it in his heart to confess that he was married—the same Joe who meant every day to write to his wife confessing his failure to find a home for her, and always put off the writing till he never wrote at all. Not a bad Joe Bushell, not by any means; an honest fellow, with a good heart, but irresolute, irresolute, irresolute.'

'Yes, Cheston,' answered Joe; 'but not irresolute now, if I know my heart at all. I'm slow in finding where duty lies. The way's perplexed. I want to go back, Cheston. I want to make up, if I only could, for a little of what she's suffered. But, I must think of her, and think of her only.'

'Well, Joe,' returned Cheston, gripping him more warmly still by the shoulders, as Joe stood with bent head to hide the tears that dripped slowly through his beard to the earthen floor, 'you must let your friends act as mediaries, and hasten things a little. That's all. I won't press you for the present. Good-bye, old man, and keep a good heart. You'll be together, and be happy yet, the pair of you, I hope and trust. She's a dear woman, Joe—a dear good woman!'

'Yes,' said Joe; 'I know it.'

Cheston shook him by the shoulders once again, and left him there. As he marched towards his dog-cart he muttered a great oath to his beard.

'I'll bring that foolish fellow and his wife together before the sun goes down.'

He filled his meerschaum, stepped into Mr. Bowker's cottage for a light, charming Mrs. Bowker's heart with noisy affabilities, threw half-a-crown to Bowker the younger, mounted the dog-cart, touched up the slashing mare, and drove away. The first thing he did on reaching home was to find his sister. He threw himself into a chair and faced her with an air of gloomy determination.

'What is the matter, Sydney?' cried the elderly spinster.

'You'll keep your mouth shut, Dorothea, about what I'm going to tell you?' he demanded.

'Really, Sydney,' she declared, 'you grow quite horrid. What a dreadful phrase! What is it?'

'Promise!' he asked, and she promised. 'That fellow won't come

'Dear me!' said Miss Cheston; 'I thought he was so eager to be reconciled to his wife.'

'So he is, but he's got some maggots in his head about her having learned to hate him during his absence, and about the shock of his return being terrible to her. You know where he is? Very well. Did you ever go down a coal mine?'

'What a question! You know I never did.'

'Well, don't you think it rather an odd thing that a lady living all her life in this part of the country has never been down a coal mine? Don't you *want* to go down a coal mine?'

'Certainly not,' replied the lady.

'Not if you could persuade Miss Donne and Mrs. Bushell to want to go down a coal mine too? Not if we went to the Buzzard, and in place of going down I just walked into the offices with Mrs. Bushell and said, "Excuse me, madam, but this is your husband. Fight it out between you!"'

'Wouldn't that be too sudden, Sydney?'

'Won't the news be sudden whenever it comes?' her brother asked. 'Now, will you help me? Will you want to go down a coal mine when we're at luncheon, and persuade the others to come with us?'

'Oh,' said the spinster, 'you begin it, Sydney.'

'Very well,' said the Baronet. 'I'll begin it. Back me up, and we'll have this mournful business over, and take to piping and gaiety again.'

So being foiled on one side, the obstinate baronet made this new approach, and opened his batteries at luncheon.

'Dorothea,' he began, 'I don't believe you've ever been down a coal mine.'

'I never have,' responded Dorothea; adding untruthfully, but according to programme, 'I should like it of all things.'

'Have you ever been down a coal mine, Mrs. Bushell? No? Nor you, Miss Donne? How singular! What do you say, Dorothea? If your guests would like to go, I'm thinking of going down my new mine, the Buzzard, this afternoon. It's quite clean, and perfectly safe.'

The deceitful Dorothea, animated by the best intentions, quite sparkled with delight over the prospect. The spirit of adventure and daring awoke in Ethel's heart, and *she* would like to go of all things. Dinah turned a little pale at the idea, and shook her head, but, being of a yielding nature, was overruled, and consented. She would like it very much, she said, only—she was a little timid. But she would be glad to see what a mine was like, if Sir Sydney Cheston was sure there was no danger.

'I shall lead you into no danger, Mrs. Bushell,' cried Sir Sydney jovially. 'Have no fear.'

So the thing being settled, the women retired after luncheon to put on their plainest and least spoilable clothes, and when they were dressed Sir Sydney led the way to the carriage and drove off with them, bearing in his heart a resolution the like of which would not be unbecoming in the leader of a storming party. Dorothea was fluttering, as any middle-aged tender-hearted maiden lady would have a right to flutter under such circumstances as she found herself in. Ethel, for the first time for many a long week, was gay at heart again. The sense of adventure, for there was just a spice of danger about her thoughts of the expedition, brightened and revived her, acting like a spiritual tonic of a strongish sort. Dinah, innocent motive-power of the whole movement, was somewhat nervous, but would not show it. The road on which they travelled had for her the memories it had for Joe a few weeks earlier, and the young figure with the long light hair worn in the fashion of 1850, and the blue eyes and the callow bit of sprouting whisker, went with her all the way. They passed the Saracen (she had dropped her veil a mile before), and she saw it changed and unlike itself. The new face it wore chilled her curiously.

The genial and noisy Baronet was so obviously changed by the way that Ethel began to suspect him. But she could say nothing and do nothing, and her suspicion, after all, was only a vague fear, and had no ground to go upon.

The carriage turned by-and-by into the lumpy lane, and there Dinah, who sat behind, sighted John Keen talking with a bearded stiff-set stranger whose face was partly turned away. John caught sight of her at the same time, and the bearded stranger stepped through a gap in the hedge and disappeared. Sir Sydney Cheston used evil language inwardly, and lashed his horses so that they sprang, and elicited a squeak of fright from Miss Dorothea. For the vanished figure was Joe Bushell's, and a word of John's, as Sir Sydney guessed, had set him off.

'Hillo, Keen!' cried Cheston, jerking his horses up viciously, 'who was that you were talking to?'

'Your manager at the Buzzard, Sir Sydney,' John responded, refusing to be drawn into the Baronet's plot, and indeed in his own mind gravely disallowing it all merit.

'Where's he gone to?' growled the Baronet angrily. 'Can't you get him to come back, Keen? Follow him, there's a good fellow.'

John obeyed, but after a ten minutes' absence rejoined Sir Sydney at the mouth of the mine. He took him aside.

'It's of no use, Sir Sydney. He will not startle her. He is afraid of shocking her—really afraid. Do him justice. Try to bring it about in a quieter way.'

'Hang it all!' Cheston grumbled, heartily savage at his failure. 'I've brought 'em all here on a fool's errand, pretending to take 'em down the mine. Confound the mine!'

'Well,' said John bluntly, 'that's better than bringing them with no reason at all, sir. Take them down, Sir Sydney, and then take them home again, and let us be content to wait a little. Your friend will yield, if not to our pressure, to the persuasion of his own heart, by-and-by.'

'Dorothea,' called Cheston, 'come here.' His sister obeyed his summons. 'That fellow's seen us and bolted,' he said bitterly; 'and now I shall either have to confess that I've brought you here on a fool's errand, or you'll *have* to go down, though I don't think you're very hungry for it.'

'I don't want to go, Sydney,' said Miss Dorothea.

'Well, stop where you are,' said Cheston with brotherly brutality. 'I'm not going to look like a fool, in addition to being one. I shall go down, and take Miss Donne and Mrs. Bushell with me.'

'Can I be of use?' cried John. In the exercise of that double-barrelled profession of his, John had surveyed the Buzzard, and knew his depths as well as any man alive. He said as much, being eager to attach himself to Miss Donne's party and Miss Donne.

'You'll spoil your broadcloth,' said the Baronet.

'Oh,' said John, 'I'll borrow a jacket and a cap;' and with that he ran off, returning a minute later in an unbrimmed felt hat for all the world like a great basin inverted, and a new jacket of white flannel lined with carpeting of a brilliant pattern. Ethel turned away to laugh at him in private, and John was delighted to see her sparkling once again, even at his own expense.

Mr. Bowker was on the bank-side, and came down to make the necessary preparations. It is the custom in that part of the world not to use a cage but an open skip to descend in. The skip is a mere square of boards, suspended from the chain which lowers it by a big inverted letter U of iron. When the womenfolk saw this doubtful means of descent, and the yawning cavernous black of the mine below it, a tremor ran through them.

'All right, ladies,' said Mr. Bowker, observing this. 'Do't yo' be afeard. I'll fix the lot on you as right as a trivet.'

A sort of sliding door being pushed across the mouth of the



mine, the skip was lowered and allowed to rest upon it. The ladies with renewed tremors stepped forward and took their places, Cheston and Keen accompanying without tremors, the Baronet still sulky from the disappointment he had suffered, the young lawyer quite beaming at the splendid treat fortune had thrown into his way. Miss Cheston, Ethel, and Dinah were provided with chains, which being passed securely round the waist and firmly attached to the inverted iron U, seemed at least to do away with all danger of falling off. Cheston and John stood at opposite corners of the square.

‘Ready?’ cried coaly Mr. Bowker.

‘Wait a bit,’ cried the Baronet in answer. ‘Run up to the Dudley while we’re down and order half-a-dozen of champagne. We shall want a glass of wine when we come up. Eh, ladies? Now we’re ready.’

Coaly William gave the signal. The skip was hoisted, with a general inclination on the part of the feminine contingent to squeal and hold on with ridiculous tightness—the latter impulse obeyed, the former resisted. Then at a vigorous push of coaly William’s foot away went the sliding door, the black chasm yawned, and the skip dropped like a stone, with a motion so smooth and unshaken that the gleaming walls on either side seemed to shoot up past it, and the travellers themselves to hang stock still. In a while the walls began to mount less quickly, then softly ceased to mount at all, and the ladies were aware of a black cavern with an immense fire on the floor of it. John was off first, and assisted in unbinding Miss Donne and helping her down to firm earth. Happy John! full of knowledge, and able to answer all inquiries. Inquiries came in on all sides as to what was this and that and the other, and John was concisely fluent in reply, conscious that he sounded businesslike and manly in his goddess’s ears. Farther into the bowels of the earth—the heat sweltering—Miss Dorothea’s maiden susceptibilities shocked by the sight of coaly males who lay or knelt pecking at the coal, naked to the waist, in gloomy side-avenues. By-and-by the way began to be damp, began to be damper, began to run in a little stream an inch deep.

‘Place used to be as dry as a chip, Sir Sydney,’ said John.

‘I’ve always heard so,’ answered the Baronet with unwonted ill-humour in his tones. ‘Why the dickens couldn’t somebody have told us the place was in this state? The ladies will catch their death.’

‘Oh dear no,’ protested the ladies, interested now, and their fears vanishing.

Water two inches deep, and deepening apparently—ladies

hesitating—Sir Sydney refusing under the circumstances to go a step farther.

‘It’s quite dry yonder,’ said John, pointing a few yards ahead. ‘They’ve come upon a spring here, I suppose.’

‘Here,’ meant a side working to the right, where, as a few farther steps made manifest, a solitary personage sat pecking at the wall, pipe in mouth, and working by a naked candle.

‘Hillo, my man,’ cried John, ‘where’s your lamp?’

‘Oi lint um, sorr,’ said the solitary personage in accents sufficiently Milesian, and went on pecking.

He sat upon a lump of coal in the middle of a space as high and twice as wide as an ordinary room door, and the water ran between his outspread feet and round his improvised stool like a bubbling brooklet.

‘Where’s all that water coming from?’ asked John.

‘Here,’ answered Paddy, with an unusually decisive blow of his pick.

As if he had struck another rock such as that which Moses touched in the wilderness, the water, as he drew away the pick point, sprang out in a stream as thick as a man’s thumb, and spirted three or four yards.

‘Stop that!’ cried John, almost wildly. ‘Come out. Do you hear?’

The man heard, but he struck the face of coal again, and this time the water spouted out thick as a man’s arm.

‘You madman!’ John yelled, and turning he seized Ethel by the waist, and fairly lifted her and rushed up the steep incline of the dry floor, bearing her in his arms. As he ran he turned and shouted, ‘This way for your lives!’

The women rushed towards him terror-stricken, not knowing why. But John’s eyes had seen the whole surface of the wall in that side avenue quiver, and he knew the ground of his own fears. Before they could ask a question, before he had even set Ethel fairly on her feet, the wall, now twenty yards below them, broke, and with a swishing sweep and a roar the imprisoned waters leapt sheer against the farther wall, and poured up and down the main pathway of the mine.

‘Run!’ shouted John. ‘This way!’

He snatched his precious burden in his arms again, and tore-up hill. The mounting water had him to the waist; Cheston, with one arm round Dinah and another round his sister, came up behind. It was well for both men, in that desperate race for life and death, that they were strong and fleet, and well for all that one of them knew the place so thoroughly.

The water ceased to pursue them, and ebbed from waist to knee and from knee to ankle until again they stood upon dry ground. There were Davy lamps twinkling on the wall at either side where they paused, and they could see the water pouring back again to find the lower levels after its first wild rush.

'What does this mean?' cried the Baronet, panting.

'There was an old working on the north,' John answered with sobbing breath, as he set his burden down, 'an old abandoned working disused this eighty years. It must have filled with water, and that poor wretch broke into it.'

'Can we get back when the rush is over?'

'No,' said John, staring at the water twenty yards away, now heaving sullenly, but no longer ebbing. 'At this point we stand fifty feet above the level of the bottom of the shaft. There are fifty feet of water in the shaft, therefore. We are prisoners for a day or two.'

Miss Dorothea clasped her hands and fainted, and the others looked upon each other in the thick dusk with awful faces.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

ABOVE, spring sunshine and the world unconscious (even the local world as yet unconscious) of disaster; below, terror and wide-spread death.

Joe Bushell, with mingled emotions, had betaken himself to the great Midland capital, and there wandered desolate about the streets, cigar in mouth, staring in at shop windows. It was not a manly-looking part to play, this dodging and evading of a woman who had loved him, and to whom he had solemnly sworn in the hearing of God and man to be faithful. It seemed certain that Dinah would misconstrue it if she heard of it, and would set it down to his own blackguard and dastardly fear of meeting her. Better end it all, and let her know that he was still in the flesh, and waiting for her forgiveness or her scorn, as it might be, and at least desiring nothing but her happiness. He prayed for guidance, poor Joe, as he wandered lonely, elbowed out of the way of busy men, and staring vacantly into shop windows; and at last it seemed as if a voice of guidance came. He turned into an hotel, demanded a private room and writing materials, and painfully and slowly indited a letter to Miss Donne, beseeching her to prepare Dinah carefully for the news, and finally to show that letter to her. He set down all his desires—his wish to leave Dinah in perfect freedom if she chose it so; his wish to help her in the government of their erring son; his wish that the fortune she had become pos-

sessed of should remain exclusively her own; his content to do whatever she desired. He set down also in plain uncompromising words the story of his own base neglect of his promises, and offered no extenuation for it. He begged pardon humbly for the past, and he protested, in words that moved him as he set them down, his single and entire devotion to her will from that time forward.

The writing of this letter was a long and painful business, and it was more than dusk when he paced into the street with it, and dropped it, feeling as if he dropped his heart with it, into the gaping little mouth of zinc at the general post-office. He had addressed it to Miss Donne, care of Sir Sydney Cheston, Worley Hall, Staffordshire, and as he walked the streets he speculated on the time of its arrival, and wished it there, and wished it recalled, or written otherwise, as you may fancy of him.

The streets were all alive with gaslight, and the people were pushing by him to the theatre, when a dirty little fellow, fluttering a sheaf of news-sheets, came dancing by, piping—‘Awful mining disaster. A hundred miners imprisoned.’ Then, as the lad danced along, Joe heard his shrill tones sound the name of ‘Sir Sydney Cheston.’ With a horrible foreboding in his heart he dashed after the lad, thrust a shilling into one hand, snatched a paper from the other, and with the damp sheet shaking in his fingers, he pushed to a shop window and read the news. He read through it almost at a glance, and his heart fairly sickened within him. ‘Sir Sydney Cheston,’ so ran one paragraph of the curt telegraphic message, ‘was accompanied by his only sister and by Mrs. Bushell and Miss Donne, guests at Worley Hall, with whom the unfortunate Baronet was on a visit of pleasure to the mine.’

He stood a minute, understanding well enough, but numbed and incapable of action. Then, a cab passing, he hailed it, and leapt in, and gave the man directions.

‘An extra pound,’ he cried, ‘if you’re there under the half-hour. Drive your hardest.’

The cabman had heard the news—it was all over the district, and in type in London news-offices, by this time—and half to win his pound, and half because he had caught something of that amazing flash which passes from man to man sometimes, he flogged his horse along at a furious speed, and once on the level, unobstructed country road, put him fairly at a gallop, and kept him at it, until the blazing, smoky cressets round the Buzzard’s mouth came into sight, revealing a sea of faces, and the horse began to stumble dangerously in the uneven lane. Joe thrust a couple of sovereigns into the driver’s hand, and dashed from the cab, fighting his way like a madman through the crowd. Men

and women, at the sight of his face, made way for him, and called for others to make way.

'Mek way theer,' cried the hoarse Black Country voices, 'cossent see the mon's got somebody down?'

When once that cry began, the crowd parted for him and made way.

Bowker was at the mouth of the mine, his face pale below its coal-dust, and his lips set firmly. He was ordering here and there, quietly and with self-possession.

'Your wife's down, Master Joseph,' he said when Joe laid a hand upon his arm. They had talked of Dinah many times since the coally little man had pierced the disguise of Joe's alias. 'And the gaffer, an' his sister, an' young Keen, an' Miss Donne, as used to belong to Quarry Moor. Hode up, an' be a mon, Master Joseph. There's a lad o' mine down, too.'

'What are you doing?' asked Joe with forced calmness.

'I sent for the fire engines to help pump,' said William, 'but the hose ain't long enough, not to come near the water.'

'I'll wire to Birmingham—London—anywhere, for every foot that can be had for money,' said Joe.

'Right!' cried William. 'Yo' can leave me here. I'll leave no stone unturned.'

Joe was off again, the crowd once more dividing for him. The cabman was still where he had left him, breathing his horse. Joe mounted again, and was driven to the local fire office, then, having made inquiries, to the telegraph office, whence in a minute or two were despatched winged messages for succour here and there. Next he raced back to the scene of the disaster, there only to stand still and taste the horrible nausea of waiting, whilst the engines clanked, and the vast pumping bucket dropped like a stone, or came up (with every inch of steel rope that bore it vibrating like a living conscious nerve) to vomit its hundreds of gallons, and stonelike fall again.

It was in his mind all the while that his coming back had led Dinah here. It was in his mind that the letter of that afternoon was too late written. A day earlier, it would have saved her.

There was nothing to be done but wait. The huge bucket went up and down, the engineman drove his fiery steed as he had never driven it before.

'What depth of water, William?' asked Joe with desperate quiet.

'Fifty-two feet, we reckon,' returned William.

'What area does it cover?'

'Young Wilki's on the surveyor's i' the office wi' the plans,' answered William. 'He's mekin' his calculations. We shall know directly.'



In a while the surveyor came with his report: so many thousand cubic feet of water in the mine, so many hundred feet being lifted by the means at present at disposal. Result—irrefragable and terrible—two hundred and thirty-two hours' work before them, and by that time hope all over.

No. There came answering messages from London, from Birmingham, from Manchester. Hose of specified size, with brass screws and jointings as indicated, on the way, enough to serve half-a-dozen engines.

'I am sorry to tell you, sir,' says a grave man (manager of a great neighbouring factory), speaking sorrowfully, when Joe had read out the last of these telegrams to William, 'that fire-engines will be of no service.'

'No service!' cried Joe, horror-stricken. 'Why not?'

'How are the pumps to suck water at such a distance?'

This query fell like a blow on all who heard it.

'You must fill your hose with water to make it draw, and to fill it you would have to fill the mine. Every spot you pour in would run through.'

Horrible, but convincing. Nature has but one set of laws for all sets of human circumstances. The man who had dealt this blow had turned sadly to leave the place, when Joe seized him by the arm.

'Stop!' He half thought he knew him. 'You are an engineer?'

'Yes; a bit of one.'

'Come with me to the offices, and for Heaven's sake tell me if there's anything in a scheme I have.'

They pushed through the crowd in silence, and once within the office, Joe, with a trembling hand, drew a pencil from his pocket, and taking a sheet of paper, made two parallel perpendicular lines upon it.

'Take that,' he said, 'as representing the hose.'

'Yes,' said the other, nodding.

Joe drew a line across the other two in the middle and one at the base.

'Take this as representing the water-line, and this the bottom of the shaft.'

'Yes,' said the manager again.

'Take this as representing a brass case,' continued Joe, scoring two lines across the bottom of the imaginary hose. 'Suppose the case fixed firmly by a screw. Suppose it filled with gunpowder enough to blast it—an electric wire attached—the whole thing lowered—the tube filled with water—the pumps ready—'

'There's something in that, maybe,' said the manager with Scotch caution. 'But, ah 'm as ignorant of hydraulics as a baby. Anyway, we'll test it. Come away wi' me this minute.'

So for one hour at least there was something else to do than wait. The two men rushed together to the great factory where the Scotchman held command, and the manager's hands drew the plans for the powder case, hands of skilled artisans were set to work at it, hammers rang on anvil, and red sparks flew, and the thing was done with incredible rapidity and deftness.

'We shall want more than one,' said Joe; 'how many engines can we get?'

'One steam, three or four manuals,' responded the manager. 'Mon,' he added, 'you've a head on you!'

'My wife's in the mine,' said Joe, as if that explained it all.

'Ay, ay!' said the Scotchman quietly. 'Make five or six o' they things,' he added to his foreman, 'and get water-tight wrappings for them all. I'll take this with me. Send a man to the High Street for the fire engine, an' if they say it's of no service, tell them they're mightily mistaken, an' we'll make it of service. And now, sir, to wire for every fire engine we can get.'

Messengers, who had waited at railway stations for the expected hose, came with it lumbering in waggons in the dead of night. Crowds of men harnessed to great ropes dragged at manual engines in the dead of night along the lumpy lane, and haled them to the pit's mouth. Deft mechanics, despatched from the great capital of ingenious industry close by, set up their electric machine, uncoiled their wire, and fixed their insulators. The vast crowd (ten thousand people gathered there, and lingering an hour after midnight to watch if this new hope availed anything) pressed round in close serried phalanx till all was ready. A score of brawny hands were on the pump shafts—the tube was lowered and filled—the wire gone with it—the finger of a deft artisan pressed the little ivory button that awoke the spark.

'Pump!' roared the engineer, and up and down went the pump shafts, swift and steady.

'Does it draw?' from lip to lip. 'For God's sake, does it draw?'

'It draws! Hurrah! It draws!'

The crowd cheered wildly, but in a second or two the clank of the pump-shafts ceased, and an ominous silence spread from about the shaft of the mine, as though it radiated from a centre. The ignorant experiment had failed, as it was bound to do. Nature has but one set of laws for all sets of human circumstances; no hopes can touch her or despairs move her.

Joe and Bowker, each with his hands clenched on the pumping-shaft, stared across the body of the engine at each other in mute despair. The far-off outer circles of the crowd were still cheering, when, by one consent, the volunteer workers let fall their hands, and turned away. The scattered cheers died off, and there was dead silence, and then a murmur, and the news of the failure went through the crowd, and silence fell again. Joe sat down upon a great coil of the useless tubing with hanging head and useless hands depending between his knees. The Scotch manager tapped him on the shoulder.

'We had better be doing something than nothing,' he said quietly. 'Heaven alone knows how long it will take to do it, but we must just try to dig them out from the workings of the old Bowler, yonder.'

Joe made no answer, until the Scotchman seized and shook him by the shoulder.

'No giving way, man,' he urged, 'whilst there's even a bit of a chance left.'

'Not while there's a chance,' said Joe, like a man in a dream.

The Scotchman, passing an arm through his, led him to the offices of the mine, where sat the young surveyor, poring over the plans.

'Where's the nearest point,' asked the factory manager, 'between the Buzzard and the old Bowler?'

'Here,' answered the other, laying a finger on the plan before him.

'Ay,' said the Scotchman, bending down, 'and what's the distance?'

'Sixty yards,' said the surveyor, laying a little rule across the plan, and checking his calculation.

The engineer shook his head.

'There's small hope of getting through that in time.'

'None whatever,' said the other, and rising, folded up the plan and laid it by.

The three stood quite silent for a minute, when the engineer, with a swift gesture, took the other by the arm.

'Who dialled the old Bowler?' he demanded.

'I did; and young Keen,' said the engineer, 'dialled the Buzzard. Now tell me one thing, on your soul.' He seized the plan, and opened it with nervous haste. 'Did you ever allow for the variation of the needle?' The other looked at him doubtfully, as not understanding.

'No,' he said.

'Do you know what I am talking about?' cried the Scotchman.

'No,' said the other again.

'Then there's a chance. Young Keen and I had a talk about that very matter years ago, and he told me he always made strict allowance for that same variation. Now, if that be so, the plan lies, and the two workings are nearer each other than anybody guesses. The Buzzard working keeps straight on, and the Bowler, running by the right of it, has always got a tendency towards the right, and that gives us a start of God knows how many yards. We must get at them through the Bowler. It's Sir Sidney's own mine; and if it wasn't, there'd be no man such a villain as to throw an obstacle in the way of work like this. O' way with me this minute.'

At the mere prospect of work to do, Joe rose with a new look on his face, and the three men left the offices at a run, the Scotchman leading.

'I want volunteers,' cried Joe wildly, and in answer to the cry the whole crowd swayed round him.

'Steady!' said the engineer. 'Working miners only. We can do with no others.' And from his knowledge of the men he began to call out a list of names of those about him. 'How many can work at once?' he asked, turning to the engineer.

'I'll take a dozen down to start with,' said the other, 'and send up for as many more as we can find room for.'

Joe set himself at the young surveyor's side, marched with him to the edge of the shaft of the neighbouring mine, and descended with the first batch. The surveyor indicated the place at which the work should be begun, and in as little time as it takes to tell it, the men were stripped, and the work begun.

Not only the intense and absorbing hope of saving life, but the element of uncertainty which beset the enterprise, inspired the workers with almost superhuman vigour. There was not a man there who did not in his own mind so exaggerate the difference of the accurate and inaccurate methods of measurements, that he hoped at every stroke of the pick to break in on the imprisoned party, and this ever-present hope remained, though deferred for hours, and then again deferred. And amongst all the workers none wrought with such a passion of despair and hope as Joe himself. Morning dawned, party had relieved party, and the work had gone on for many hours without a pause, before his hands, wearied to helplessness, let fall the pick, and even then he sat in the level beyond the workmen, and watched how every stroke told, until, in his wild impatience at the slowness of the work's progress, he

could, but that he restrained himself, have risen to tear with his finger-nails at the wall which imprisoned Dinah. His first mad burst of labour had so worn and spent him that his hands hung powerless at his sides; and when a friendly miner brought him food and drink, he could not reach out a finger towards either of them. Food he refused, but he drank greedily from the cup held to his lips, and sat on there, watching, as relay after relay of men relieved each other, and the black tunnel yawned deeper and deeper, and the wall at its far-end melted slowly.

Every now and then, when the 'shot' was prepared, the men, retiring from the coming explosion, forced him gently away, but he always came back and took his old seat, and watched with the old impatient hunger.

But a new thought struck Joe at last, and he was away to the telegraph office again, the Scotchman at his side, to wire to London for a diver, to hold communication with the prisoners if possible, and, if it might be, to carry them provisions. Joe had a scheme of lowering barrels filled with food, wine, candles, and lamps, and loaded to make them sink to the foot of the shaft. He will have a chain lashed to each barrel, and the diver shall carry the chains, and the prisoners tug up the barrels and provision themselves, and have hope again, and some comfort whilst they wait deliverance.

'Don't be too sanguine, sir,' said his new-found friend; 'I'm sorely afraid of the gas.'

'What gas?' cried Joe.

In those old workings (the manager told him sorrowfully) from which the water broke, there was a terrible chance that there were hollows which the springs had not filled up. If that were so, there would be bred from the stagnant water, in the womb of earth, gases fatal to life: these gases would follow the water, spread into the new workings into which the flood had broken, and slowly but surely choke every living creature there.

'That is now almost our only fear,' he added; 'but it was best that you should know it.'

'I might have known it,' groaned Joe, 'if I had only thought about it.'

'Young Keen knew those old workings,' said the engineer, 'but he's *down* too, and I doubt if anybody else knows much about them. The shaft's not overbuilt, I know, and that's some comfort. It depends, ye see, on the way the workings run. If they run away upward from the foot of the shaft, as they do in the Buzzard yon, there'll be gas there, because the bottom of the shaft would fill with water first; but if they run down or pretty level, the gradual flow of water would push the air out, and

leave none behind to get foul, and choke poor fellows' lives out o' them.'

'Pray Heaven they may run downwards!' said Joe.

'Amen!' said his companion, though he added, 'it's past praying about, for the ways were made eighty years ago. We'll just have to wait and see, ma poor friend.'

Meantime, how did it fare with the imprisoned?

There were drowned bodies floating in the dark caverns there, none could yet tell how many. The survivors numbered sixty-seven, all told—the three women, their two companions, and sixty-two miners. These last, when the news of the peril reached them, came trooping down with their lamps, a doleful crowd, and lolled about by the edge of the water, talking in hoarse murmurs with each other. This went on for hours.

'Men,' said John Keen at last, standing on a truck and speaking in a loud firm voice, 'listen to me. You know me, most of you, and you know I know my business, and you'll take my advice. You know where this water came from?'

'Yes,' answered two or three. 'It must ha' come from th' ode workin's.'

'It comes from the old workings of the Sill Pit. Do you know what will follow it when they begin to pump it down?'

'Choke-damp,' said one voice.

'Choke-damp,' John Keen repeated. 'Then, what chance have we?'

'None but i' God's mercy i' the next world,' said the man who had answered last.

'Yes,' said John, 'one chance in this world. A chance to build an air-tight wall of coal here. A chance to wait until they can clear the mine of water and gas, and set us free again.'

'That's a poor chance,' said one. 'It's a chance o' lingerin' till we're dyin' o' starvation, Mr. Keen, an' I, for one, says, "Lie down an' go to sleep, an' let the gas come up, an' have it o'er an' done wi'."'

'I say "No" to that!' cried John Keen. 'I say that whilst we have these ladies with us, it's our business to do all we can for them. I say besides, that no man has a right to throw away the life God gave him, or to lay it down if he can help it until God calls him. Who says with me?'

'I do,' and 'I do,' here and there among the crowd; but for the most part the men were dumb and despairing.

'Then, let us set to work like men,' cried John, descending. 'Three men to the front with spades. I want every inch of mud

that we can get to fill up the chinks of the wall. We can beat earth and slack up with the water there. And then coal for the wall. Work, lads, and trust in God.'

'Right, Mr. Keen,' said one old grey-bearded man. 'Let's ask a word o' blessin' on the work.'

'Pray *while* you work, Gibbons,' said John, who knew the old fellow as a Methodist local preacher of signal piety. 'We can't afford to waste a minute.'

'There's no time wasted i' praying God,' said the old man, and lifted a hand for silence. The men bowed and bared their heads. 'Lord, spare us,' he prayed hoarsely, 'to see our wives an' our little uns once more, if it be Thy holy will; an' if not, prepare us to see Thy face. And we ask it for the Lord's sake. Amen!'

'Amen!' here and there hoarsely answered from the crowd.

'I've a hand in this work, lads,' cried Cheston; 'God helps them that help themselves. That's Scripture, Gibbons, eh!'

'No, Sir Sydney,' said the old man; 'it's a good word, but it ain't between the boards o' the Bible.'

Stirred by example, the more despairing took heart and set to work with the rest. The barrier against death rose higher and higher, and while the work went on, it was noticed that all on a sudden the water began palpably to ebb.

'They are pumping amazingly up there,' said John Keen. 'Work, lads, work, for life or death!'

All was order and quiet, no man interfering with another, but all working in concert. And the wall was three feet thick and as solid as mud and coal could make it. They were closing it in at the roof, and men with spades were busy plastering the inner side, when all at once a portion of the upper surface gave way, a hundred-weight of coal rolled down, and a human figure with it. There was one piercing shriek as they came to earth together—then a heart-rending groan and quiet.

'It's Mister Keen, lads,' said old Gibbons. 'Steady there, don't drag at the poor lad i' that way! Pull the coal off first.'

'Never mind me,' said John faintly. 'Put me in the truck there, and get along. For God's sake, save the women!'

'Ay, ay!' said one, and two or three lifted him gently.

'Set me where I can see the work,' said John valiantly, and fainted.

The rough fellows left him to the women, and went back to their fight with death. In a while their work was complete, the last cranny stopped, the inner surface of their wall of salvation as smooth as the top of a table.

I have forborne to tell you of the women's thoughts, and I



still forbear, for I desire to have no reader who has not heart enough to guess how terrible they might be. They had sat in quiet at least until now, and had made no outward moan. The words which had been spoken in their bearing, the work which had been done before them, told too clearly for misunderstanding the nature of their peril, and they bore it in quiet. Sir Sydney, in his shirt-sleeves, and all begrimed with coal-dust and sweat, had paused once or twice with an unvarying formula.

“We’ll cheat the devil yet, my dears,” said the Baronet sturdily. And indeed in Sir Sydney Cheston’s mind there was present very visibly a battle with the actual Enemy in his own abode of darkness, and he spoke with no profanity or levity.

John’s swoon faded into sleep, and sleep broke into a painful yet delicious dream. He was lying somewhere in the dark at rest, after some awful toil, and suddenly Ethel’s face appeared before him with a heavenly light about it. And she reached out a hand and touched him, and the touch was agony. Yet it *was* her hand, and the touch was meant for kindness.

‘Ethel!’ he murmured. ‘My love! Ethel!’

He awoke, and her face was indeed bent over him.

‘Did I hurt you?’ she asked softly. ‘Pray be still, I will hurt you as little as possible.’

His arm was broken, and his ribs were crushed, and the women during his swoon had cut away the cloth from his wounds, and with fragments torn from their own dresses were binding them to stop their bleeding. Some of the men stood round the truck, and the light from one of their closed lamps fell softly and dimly upon Ethel’s face. John looked up to her once with his dark eyes filmed with pain, and yet with a glance of ineffable love in them. If he died, he thought, he died to save her. A thrill of passionate hope went through him. If he were her sacrifice—accepted? The hope became a prayer. Great dangers and great love breed such hopes and prayers in great hearts. He prayed with all his soul to die for her if his life might be taken for hers, and he swooned again.

Ethel had heard his words, and they had not fallen upon her ears alone. There was no revelation for her in the random ‘My love!’ born of a dream of ecstasy and agony. She had known that this gallant-hearted lad had loved her, long and long ago, it seemed, before she herself had altogether learned to love a scoundrel, and she had fixed her heart upon the clay and had despised the gold. Well, there was her destiny. She had not known. He was brave, this wounded young fellow, undaunted in the face of death, full of resource when men used to peril had given up the cause of life in despair. And in the girl’s mind, there was no hope of escape—

none! The man loved her. Was that a crime, that she had treated him so coldly for it?

She and Dinah and Miss Cheston bound his wounds, and the miners brought their heavy flannel jackets and laid them out so as to make a couch as comfortable as might be. Some of the men had tea with them, carried in the tin bottles miners use, and these by general consent were stored up for the sufferer. As for the rest of them, they could wait. Cheston's watch was going still—it was his habit to wind it in the morning—and it marked seven o'clock. They had been fifteen hours in the mine already, then, and so far nobody had thought of sleep. The lamps died out, and one of the men set off in the darkness for a store of candles kept in a stable in the upper workings.

'Only one light at a time,' said Sir Sydney, and the little dim lamp was set upon a ledge in the wall, and twinkled there duskily, scarcely making darkness visible.

The men, worn out, sat down or lay about the coaly floor here and there, and slept. The heat was sweltering. Sir Sydney, having seen to the women, took his seat by John Keen, and waited and watched there in company with his own thoughts. So for many hours there was silence, and if any man awoke, he had no desire to speak to his neighbour, but turned and strove to get to sleep again.

This was the goal, then, to which Cheston's good-natured impetuosity had led him, and not him only.

'I meant it for the best,' he said bitterly a thousand times, but the repetition was not of much comfort to him.

John stirred uneasily, and moaned every now and then, and the watchful Baronet moistened his lips with cold tea from one of the tin bottles. The time went slowly, as if on leaden wings. Cheston would rise on tiptoe every half-hour or thereabouts and look at his watch by the one glimmering Davy lamp, and every time he did so he set it to his ear, believing it had stopped. But while his thoughts galloped, time seemed to stand still, and every half-hour was like a day. At last, when some six or seven dreary hours had slipped away, he also fell asleep, and once or twice the wounded man moaned in vain. Ethel hearing him, arose, and set the cold tea to his lips. He clutched the bottle greedily, and would have drained it but for her interposing hand. She re-arranged the rough flannel garments on which he lay, making his couch easier, and again he knew her, and she seemed to hang above him like a pitying and ministering angel.

'Can I do anything more for you, Mr. Keen?' she asked, seeing that his eyes followed her with a look of intelligence.

'Thank you,' he answered faintly. 'Nothing more.'

The girl sat by the side of the truck, with one hand upon the edge of it. When she had sat thus a long time, and had grown absorbed in thought, she was startled by a soft cold pressure, and looking hastily round, she saw that John had struggled up on his sound arm, had bent over, and was kissing her hand. She rose and laid him gently down again.

'Lie still,' she said, 'or you will hurt yourself.' She could not find it in her heart to offer any severer rebuke than this.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. GEORGE BUSHELL, the younger, sitting at his desk one bright soft spring afternoon, earning as lightly as he could some fraction of the weekly five-and-thirty shillings, was startled by the sudden advent of a stranger who demanded him by name. The stranger turned out to be one of Sir Sydney Cheston's clerks, and was charged with a message from young George's father; a message to the effect that young George must at once betake himself to Staffordshire under circumstances of great urgency. An ice-taloned pang—as Mr. Carlyle once wrote *à propos* of Balaam—ran through brain and pericardium, but the young man dared not disobey. It was in his mind that he was to be confronted with Sir Sydney, who would beyond doubt remember him, and he was terrified at the bare thought of the encounter. George's employer made some faint opposition to his going, but the messenger assured him of the gravity of the occasion, and, acting on instructions, gave no explanation to the youngster. The time spent in the journey was full of uncomfortable reflections and sensations, but George had no stomach for questioning his new companion, and the clerk himself, being of a solid and stolid business mind, offered no remark from start to finish. Even the dreariest journeys come to an end, and at last young George's journey terminated in the presence of his father on the bank of the Buzzard, crowded still by thousands of spectators.

'There has been an accident here,' said Joe quietly; 'have you read of it in the newspapers?'

'No,' said George.

Joe told the story.

'All that can be done,' he added, 'we are doing. I thought it best that you should be here.'

Young George could scarcely tell why. Dinah's danger concerned him very nearly, and although he was not a sympathetic young man, he felt horrified at the story. He had never disliked

Dinah actively, and it was certainly awful that she should be placed in such a position. Her peril was in part his own: for if she should not be recovered, what shield or hope had he? This terrible father of his might keep him at clerkship all his life, and on the least pretence leave all his money to a charity, to a friend, to a wife perhaps. So that, taking it altogether, young George experienced and displayed as much grief as could be expected of him.

Among other aids for which Joe had called, the diver came from London and made a descent, but speedily returned with discouraging news. The mouth of the working had fallen in, and there was no possible passage at present. The women, wives and daughters of the imprisoned miners, who sat in the hovels about the top of the shaft, maintained the quiet characteristic of their kind in such times of peril. They refused to eat, for there is a superstition among them that to take food seals the fate of their dear ones below. All of them sat in silence with their shawls drawn over their heads, and waited with a patience heart-wringing to look at.

'Thee sha'st have him back, Selina, if it's i' mon's power to do it,' said William Bowker to his wife whenever he passed her, and he always went back to the work with renewed passion and vigour after these words of cheer.

Some feeble power to grasp returning to Joe's hands he was down the mine again, and for a while insisted on being allowed to take a place once more, but seeing by-and-by how weak his strokes were, and recognising the fact that he filled the place of a better man, he fell back sadly, and was fain to content himself once more with watching. Whenever he could do it without interrupting the work he paced the tunnel, measuring it by his strides, and always came back, groaning over the slowness of its progress. The Scotch engineer begged him again and again to rest, even though the man who gave the advice recognised the impossibility of it. But at last, when the work had been prosecuted for fifty hours, a 'shot' was fired, and the men, rushing back to renew their labour, started a cheer. For lo! the wall was down. Joe ran to join them at this cheering sound, but before he had reached the end of the tunnel the men fell back upon him and bore him away with them, and for a while recoiled slowly backwards, step by step, and turning, ran to the foot of the shaft, bearing him amongst them, struggling and imploring.

'It's all over, master,' said one man sadly; 'the plaas is full o' choke-damp.'

They all ascended to the mouth of the mine and told the mournful news.

In the mind of every man and woman there, it made an end of hope. The women began to eat, moistening their food with tears, and by ones, and twos, and threes, they stole away to their homes.

'It's all o'er, Master Joseph,' said Bowker.

'Yes,' said Joe, 'it's all over.'

A cloud was round him, and he felt himself a murderer. But though hope had gone, labour could not yet be relaxed. The gas became so dense in the shaft, that when a cage of fire was lowered into it—an iron framework holding more than a hundredweight of glowing coal—the light went out as completely and as suddenly as if it had been dipped in water. Even for this last sad contingency the workers were prepared, and the task of clearing the mine was carried on as swiftly as if hope still reigned in every bosom. The manner of the clearing was simple and (all things considered) rapid. At the edge of the shaft was set up a revolving fan, and running from this was a wide tube of iron, not unlike a stove-pipe. After travelling straight for a yard, the pipe took a sudden bend and dipped into the shaft. The fan being set in motion forced a fierce current of wind through the tube, and in a few minutes the topmost section of the shaft was sufficiently ventilated to permit of a man being sent down to attach a second length of tubing to the first. This in its turn prepared for the attachment of a third, and that of a fourth, and so hour by hour the tube crept slowly downward, each length being secured by a holdfast driven firmly into the wall, and all the junctures being smeared with clay. The crowd had long since melted, and it was midnight when the foot of the shaft was reached, and men in relays could be set to carry the ventilating tube farther, and step by step the devilish gas was fought out of the mine, and hopeless morning dawned. Joe, despairing and self-accusing, found the tremendous physical strain of the labour a relief to him. He could not think much or even feel much yet. Four sleepless nights and days laid their hand of heaviness upon his heart, and he felt only a wretched numbness. His despair and his self-accusations seemed to lie in wait for him hereafter, and in the mean time he worked as madly to get at Dinah's dead body as he had worked while hope remained with him.

There was a dreary drizzle falling when he ascended the shaft with his rough mining companions, and left the work to a new relay of men below. Young George had, of course, long since known the end. He was sorry for Dinah; he was as grieved about Ethel as it was in him to be grieved about anything, and he had taken his turn at work, not altogether without manliness and courage. Joe had some sore-hearted hope of him.

'You had better lie down and get a little sleep,' said George to his father, as they stood in the drizzle together at the mouth of the shaft; and Joe, without a word of answer, walked into one of the hovels and lay down. He tossed to and fro for half an hour, courting sleep in vain, in spite of his fatigue and the enormous labours of the past few days. He seemed to hear the voice which shook Macbeth—

Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more.'

The horror of his thoughts, his unavailing repentance, the memory of his errors, were so heavy upon him that he rose again, and walking once more to the head of the shaft, demanded to be lowered.

'May I go with you?' asked George.

Human motives are complex things, and there was probably some real human pity and repentance in the young man's heart when he made this request.

'As you like,' his father answered. The two went down together, without another word, and after a while came in sight of the last relay, with Bowker in command. The men were at work at a great heap of *débris* which when Joe had left it had completely blocked up the roadway, and they had so reduced it that by this time there was ample space for a man to climb over. The air was heavy, and the lamps were burning dimly.

'Theer's damp beyond, still, Master Joseph,' said Bowker.

'Ay,' said Joe quietly. 'How much higher do you think the water rose?'

'Theer's a sort of a sudden lift, like, here,' returned William. 'The poor things ud tek refuge a bit further on. We shall light on some on 'em when this is down.' He pointed to the mound in front.

Joe turning away pushed through the men, climbed up the heap of rubbish, and waved his glimmering lamp to and fro in the darkness, striving to make out what lay beyond. Suddenly he cried out in a wild voice which made every man there turn to look at him.

'Bowker! Come here!' William scrambled up to his side. 'What's that?' cried Joe, pointing eagerly through the darkness.

'Gi' me a lamp theer!' William called to one of the men below.

The two fell rather than scrambled down the slimy inner side of the bank, and advanced a yard or two.

'Send I may live!' gasped William, 'they've builded a wall again' the damp. That's young Keen's doin', I lay my life. 'Zakiel,' he roared, 'bring a peck here!'

He dashed back to meet the man who brought the pick, snatched it from his hand at the summit of the mound, dashed back again, and waving Joe aside, struck blow after blow upon the wall with the energy of a madman, and then ceasing suddenly, he set his ear against the coal and listened.

'Stop work theer,' he yelled a second later. 'Still as death every mon among ye.'

All sounds of labour ceased, and a death-like silence, broken only by a heavy breathing here and there, fell upon the place. Joe followed his companion's example, and set his ear to the coal wall.

Tap! tap! tap! upon the wall within.

'Lads,' roared the little man in a voice like a hoarse trumpet, 'theer's some on 'em alive! This way!'

Joe caught the pick from Bowker's hand and drove it deep into an interstice between two huge lumps of coal, and tugged so wildly that the shaft of the tool broke, and he reeled against the side of the working. But there were hearts behind as willing as his own, and arms as strong. The miners charged the heap of rubbish with a gasping cheer, and fell upon the wall of salvation as men in desperate battle fall upon a foe.

'David,' said Bowker, laying his hand upon one man's shoulder, 'goo up an' bring down every mon theer. Get the trolley-line cleared all along.'

'Right, gaffer,' answered David, and sped away.

'Yo' heerd 'em tap, mister?' asked one coal-blackened giant as he worked.

'Stop, all of you!' cried Joe.

They ceased, and in the sudden silence they could hear the sound of a score of picks beating at the other side. At that glad token they raised a cheer, and fell upon the work again like drilled furies, until a dim light shone through.

'Who's that?' one of the rescuers shouted.

'Ebenezer Howl,' said a voice inside.

'How many on you?' cried Bowker.

'Sixty-seven,' said Ebenezer Howl.

'That's my feyther,' said another voice. 'Is that Bill Bowker?'

'Me, lad, God bless thee!' William answered, with the tears channelling his dusky face.

'Cheston!' called Joe.

'Right!' answered the Baronet's voice.

'Set to it!' Bowker cried. 'Get 'em out o' this!'

The work began again on both sides, and in a little while a breach was made. By some sort of common consent—for by this



time every rough fellow there knew his story—Joe Bushell was the first man allowed to climb through. Cheston grasped him by the hand. Neither could say more than ‘God bless you!’ but the words expressed their own meaning, and were spoken from the heart.

‘This way,’ said Cheston, after a moment’s pause.

The men had torn the lamp open, and by this time the whole remaining store of candles burned dimly in the foul and abominable air. Almost every man held a light, and Joe could see the face and figure he had last seen at Wrethedale. He ran forward and seized Dinah by the hands.

‘Dinah,’ he said, ‘do you know me?’

She answered not a word, but rose gasping, and looked wildly at him, he holding her by both hands.

‘You know me, Dinah?’

She drew her hands away, and casting both arms about his neck, and calling on his name, she fainted. Joe bore her to the foot of the shaft—he would allow no hands but his own to touch her—and they were carried swiftly to the open light of day. The message despatched half an hour ago had flown far already, and all about the fields were hurried figures making for the mine, and any hurried figure seen from a mile away wending in that direction was taken as a signal, as in such cases it always is, so that the whole district far and wide was wakened to a mad mingling of hope and wonder, and a thousand men and women were on their way to the Bowler’s mouth from every point of the compass. When Joe appeared bearing his burden in his arms, there were perhaps a hundred people gathered round the shaft, and from them rose a roar of questioning.

‘Alive?’

The tears were streaming down Joe’s cheeks, and he answered in a broken voice,

‘Alive!’

They cheered like mad things, and far and near about the fields arose answering shouts of cheering. A hundred hands were stretched to offer help, but Joe laid his blessed burden down unaided and knelt beside it.

‘How many down, mister?’ asked one old woman, touching him on the shoulder; ‘how many?’

‘Sixty-seven,’ Joe answered.

‘Alive?’

‘Alive and well, thank God,’ said Joe.

The hearers shouted with wild cheer on cheer, answering voices came from the rainy fields, hurrying steps quickened to a headlong race, the crowd swelled and gathered with mad hurrahings, the

news was asked by each new-comer, and told again with husky shouts of triumph and delight. Men who were strangers to each other, rough fellows unused to the melting mood, shook hands with tears. Women embraced each other, or knelt in thanksgiving. Workers in neighbouring factories cast down their tools and ran, shouting the news of rescue right and left, and the crowd grew as if by magic, until the surging mob rose high about the mound, and every place of vantage was flooded by the human wave.

Ethel, bravely as she had borne herself through the long night of danger and famine, fainted when she heard the news of rescue, and she and Dorothea were brought to the light unconscious of the maddening cheers which hailed them. Then came John Keen muttering rapidly in the delirium of fever, and at the sight of his pale face and prone bandaged figure the crowd forbore to cheer. But the cheering began again with the next batch, and went on with increase as the crowd grew vaster.

By-and-by, amongst the rescued came a patriarch, Aminidab Hick by name, who had a place in this chronicle once before, though but a slight one. Dinah's mother bade him 'good-night' six-and-twenty years before this, and he was an old man by this time. His imprisonment, and the want of food and water, had been almost too much for him, yet a touch of native valour and humour brightened his heart as he reached the surface and saw heaven's blessed light again.

It was noticeable that the patriarch was bare-footed when brought to bank. He was so reduced that it was needful for one man to take him by the legs and another by the shoulders to bear him through the crowd. Sighting a local cobbler there, he called out to him feebly with a quavering chuckle.

'Bill! Bill Dyson!'

'Hillo!' said the local cobbler.

'Got that theer pair o' boots I give you a order for done yet?' asked the patriarch.

'No,' said the cobbler.

'Look sharp about 'em, then,' said the patriarch pointing to his feet. 'I shall want 'em pretty soon. I've eaten my old uns.'

There was a great guffaw of laughter in which the prostrate patriarch joined feebly, as he was borne away. His daughter was waiting for him in the crowd, and they were crying and blessing each other tenderly a minute later. And every time the skip ascended with its load of rescued men there were such scenes as you may fancy. Mothers and children met husbands and fathers, sisters welcomed brothers, sweethearts, a little coy, perhaps, before this awful danger came, cast off all coyness now, and met their

lovers with fast-falling tears and clinging kisses and twining arms, and heart joined heart no more to be divided. With the last batch came Cheston, pale and grimed, but sturdy, and waved a cheer to the roaring crowd, who made at him and took him shoulder-high and patrolled with him in mad fashion about the mound, until it occurred to some of the more collected spirits that after a four days' fast a substantial man like Sir Sydney might naturally wish for something more solid than the mere breath of popular applause. Food and wines and restoratives of all sorts were there in plenty, provided in the first hopeful days, and by-and-by the Baronet was on his legs with a steaming jorum of beef-tea in his hands.

'Your health, lads,' he said in his cheerful voice, nodding round before he drank. 'God bless you!'

The Baronet's carriage and horses had been quartered close by, and a hurried message being now despatched for them, they came.

The men would fain have taken out the horses, and dragged Cheston and his party home in triumph, but he forbade them.

'Think of the women, my lads,' he shouted. 'They want rest and quiet.'

At this appeal the crowd forbore. There were a thousand things to be done, and no man for the moment with a head worth a straw upon his shoulders. Young George stood clumsily in the inner circle, not knowing what to do, yet longing to do something to be of service, or to look as if it were of service—something to break through the cloud which rested upon him. Why had he not been the first to discover the wall which had kept the prisoners in safety? Or why, since chance went against him there, had he not seized a pick and made his way through first of all? He would willingly have done something to redeem himself, if he had only seen his way to it, and the way had not been dangerous over and above the reasonable. As it was, he could only stand there a little hangdog in his looks, known to everybody about him as a convicted felon, and shunning everybody's eyes. And the girl who had been his plighted wife was lying in a dead swoon within six yards of him, and he had no right to go near her! Hands coarsened with habitual labour had brought her here; hands foul enough with mire and coal-dust, but cleaner than his, after all, and worthier to touch her. There was his old friend and companion lying wounded and unconscious. He *would* do something, after all.

He pushed forward, and in doing so accidentally thrust against William Bowker.

'Bowker,' said George with hangdog looks, 'poor Mr. Keen

looks very ill. Where can we get him to? What is the nearest place?' 'There can we get him to? What is the nearest place?'

'Nothin' nearer than my cottage,' said William readily. 'We'll tek him theer. Get that door off its hinges, lads.'

Half-a-dozen men ran to obey the order, and the door being unshipped, John was laid upon it, and borne gently across the field, the crowd making way. George, with hangdog air, went on in front, commanding and entreating in shame-stricken fashion, and on reaching the cottage door opened it for the bearers, and gave one of the men the only half-crown he had to run for a doctor. The man started off, and George stayed with his whilom rival, old friend, and enemy, but before the doctor came he had other and less welcome visitors.

Sir Sydney Cheston was for putting his sister and Ethel and Dinah into the carriage, and driving off with them at once, as they were, but this rash counsel was overruled. When Dinah recovered she saw above her her husband's face, and Joe was holding a teaspoonful of brandy and water to her lips. Seeing her partially recovered, Joe called for beef-tea, and Dinah lay back crying feebly, but, with infinite happiness and contentment, sipping at the spoon he held to her lips. One of the miners' sisters had already taken Miss Donne in hand, and was pouring sherry by the teaspoonful through her pale lips, and by-and-by the girl revived and sat up. Cheston's attentions restored his sister, and in a little while the women became collected enough to observe the great crowd of eager-eyed people watching them, and, modesty taking alarm, they rose and begged to be taken away.

'Not yet, my darlin',' said the woman who had charge of Ethel. 'Come into th' offices, ladies, an' pick a bit o' somethin' gradual like, my dears, an' get your stren'ths up.'

So they went into the offices and mixed feeble tears with sherry and beef-tea, and sipped the compound, until Ethel, who had hitherto been more than half dazed even since her recovery from her swoon, demanded to be informed of the condition of Mr. Keen.

'He saved all our lives,' she said. 'Where is he?'

For the moment nobody knew, but a word of inquiry traced him, and after a space of half an hour or so, Cheston gave his arm to his sister, and led the way, Joe following with Dinah on his arm, and Ethel supported by the gallant Bowker in the rear. The women were all three terribly bedragged and dirty, and Mrs. Bowker dashed about for water and towels, brushes and soap, and helped them at their toilet. They had not starved altogether during their imprisonment, for some of the men who had food with them had voluntarily surrendered it for the women. The

fare was coarse and unaccustomed, but after the first day hunger drove them to it, and they had enough to save them from actual famine. But the stress and strain of emotions during that long night—a night of ninety hours, which dragged like ninety years—had left them so haggard and woe-begone in aspect that they looked near death's door.

George was in the kitchen by John Keen's side when they passed through the tiny front parlour and went upstairs, and peeping through a chink in the door he saw them. He was more than half inclined to run away, but he bethought himself, and resolved to be seen in the act of doing something helpful. So he still shamefacedly sat by the side of John Keen and was there when his father and Cheston entered. Whilst the two stood looking at the patient and talking in quiet tones about him, the doctor came, and pronounced the case serious.

'Get the best men in England to see him, Holmes,' said the Baronet. 'I'd rather spend my last penny than lose him. He saved us all.'

The doctor did what was to be done for the time being, and then mounted the stairs to attend the women. Mrs. Bowker was haranguing in shrill reproof of their desire to go away.

'Why, it's six mile if it's a foot,' cried Mrs. Bowker, 'an' it 'ud just be mere murderin' madness to think on it. You lie down o' this bed, an' theer's room for two i' th' other room, an' have a nice long sleep, an' a good meal when you're rested. An' here's the doctor, an' I'll bet a pound he says as I say.'

'I certainly say as you say, Mrs. Bowker,' observed the doctor, glancing round. 'Ladies, I forbid you to attempt even so short a journey without rest. A little composing draught for each of you—a little sleep—and I trust to avoid all evil consequences.'

Mr. Bowker at this moment was busily transferring a bed from a neighbour's house, with the neighbour's readily-given help, and this was set up in the parlour, and John Keen with infinite tenderness comfortably undressed and settled in it. The women obeyed the doctor's orders. Cheston, unwilling to leave them, took a great draught of wine and cast himself upon the kitchen sofa and fell asleep there. Joe threw himself upon the rough rug before the fire, with a rolled-up coat for a pillow, and lay wakeful for a long while, with his heart full of gratitude and tenderness and resolve. But in a while he also fell asleep, and being utterly worn out by four nights and days of mental agony and bodily labour, he lay like a log, and no dreams visited him. The tenant of the cottage, his wife, and their recovered son, betook them-

selves to the brewhouse, and, having made a roaring fire there, lay down upon the floor and slept also.

Nine worn-out people slumbered in the house and one kept watch, until under the soothing influence of the opiate the doctor had administered, John Keen's sleep became as profound as that of the rest; and young George walked on tiptoe out of the house, and lit his pipe and rambled across the field, by this time deserted. Where ten thousand cheering, weeping, half-mad men and women had stood two hours ago, not a creature was to be seen. He had peeped round the side of the house to be sure that the coast was clear, and being satisfied of it he walked on with bent head, and looked at his prospects with a failing heart. Lifting his eyes, he saw the house of his old employer some quarter of a mile away, and this bringing George Bushell the elder into his mind, he cursed him with great ardour, and roamed on again.

'The old villain!' so thought and said the young one. 'He knew who I was all the time, and kept me out of my money, and sent me to prison like a felon, and——Curse him! It's too much for a man to bear to think of.' He stopped to kick a clod of earth savagely, and then roamed on again. Having once got old George in his mind, it was not easy to let him out, and having him there it was not in human nature, so he said, to hold back from cursing him. The mine offices were empty, and he entered one of them and sat down moodily, tracing out, as he had done a thousand times already, old George's villanies. 'The infernal old hypocrite!' cried the young man aloud. He had naturally a great loathing of the old man's crimes, and felt as righteous an anger at them as any morally spotless man could feel; and his anger being of the sort which demands to be flogged, he rose up from the seat he had taken, and travelling rapidly up and down the room, he gave such comminatory eloquence as he had full swing until he was in the mind to have taken the wicked old George by the throat, with full intent to choke the rascally old life out of him.

Turning suddenly in his vengeful promenade, and muttering to himself, he actually thought for one second that he beheld an apparition; for there in the doorway stood old George, leaning on a couple of walking-sticks, and peering with a purblind look into the room. The old man's house overlooked the scene of action. He had heard the news of the rescue, had watched the crowd disperse, and, seeing the carriage driven away again, supposed everybody gone.

'Who's there?' he quavered, peering into the half gloom of the place with purblind look. 'I can't see nothin' close at hand, without glasses,' he murmured; and having transferred his right-

hand stick to his left hand, he began to fumble at the pocket of his overcoat, and after a time found his glasses, and with shaky fingers set them astride his nose, the two walking-sticks rattling in his left hand as he did it. It was amazing how much less righteously indignant the younger rascal felt, finding himself thus unexpectedly in presence of the old one. But he glared at old George, and old George, able to make him out now, glared at him with each of his hands quavering on his unsteady walking-sticks, and his jaw quite fallen.

'Why!' said old George at last. 'Why—why—what's this? Eh?'

His tone was that of a man awestruck. Young George took heart at it.

'I met my father, and returned to England,' said he, not lying in words, but only in intent—a thing that soothed his conscience greatly. 'And I know now how to value your Christian kindness, sir.'

The emphasis on 'Christian' was a memory of Miss Bateman's *Leah*.

'I'd ha' acted well by you if you'd ha' deserved it,' said the old man, in a loud quavering voice. 'But you was a bad lot.'

'I think,' said young George, 'that *you* have very little right to reproach me, sir. And let me tell you, that if it had not been for my influence—— But I need waste no words about that. Let me pass, sir. We two can have little to say to each other.'

'I'd ha' acted well by you,' old George repeated, 'if you'd ha' deserved it.'

'Do you suppose,' asked the martyred young George disdainfully——'were you ever able to pretend to yourself that you supposed I meant to steal that three hundred pounds?'

'Meant to steal it? Why, you stole it.'

'I never stole a marriage certificate,' returned the younger. 'I never——'

'What!' cried the old man, trembling from head to foot. 'You speak them words again, an' I'll niek you prove 'em. You viper! What was you ever born for but to bring trouble? I give my newew Joseph a hunderd pounds to run away from home wi', an' he comes back an' robs me underhanded, an' leaves me to find out as he's back again, by accident. If it hadn't ha' been for me you'd ha' been a-lyin' in gaol this minute. You stingin' viper! You come an' talk to me! I'll settle you. You ever speak a word to me again, you gaol-bird, you, an' I'll break ivery bone i' your skin! I've a mind to do it now.'

And old George did indeed stagger at the martyr with such a

paralytic rage that George the younger incontinently got out of the building and replied from without.

'I don't want to hurt you,' he said, 'and you had better keep your distance, Mr. Bushell.'

'Let me get at you,' quavered old George, 'an' I'll be the death on you.'

'The thing would be more likely to go the other way,' young George replied, retreating. 'But I'm not going to fight with a man who has both feet in the grave.'

'Yah, you coward!' snarled old George. 'Stand still, you dog, an' I'll flog your life out.'

'Lay a hand on me,' shouted young George, retreating still, 'and you'll be sorry for it.'

'You've got a bold tongue enough,' said the other, pausing and panting and shaking one of his paralytic sticks, 'but you tek uncommon good care to be out o' reach.'

'I'm not going to allow myself to be struck by a man on whom I can't retaliate without dishonour,' said young George, pausing likewise.

This statement so affected the old man that he stood shaking both his sticks in the air in a rage altogether impotent, and ground imprecations between his teeth.

'They call you a respectable man still,' cried young George, warming with the recollection of his wrongs, 'and I am a felon! But what right have you to speak a word of reproach to me? You! Why, I never heard of such a villain.'

How much further young George's candour and indignation might have carried him cannot be known, for his hearer began to stagger and to grope feebly in the air, and to see again before him that awful mist with the splashes of red and black in it. He was surely going to die this time. The hand of Heaven's vengeance was again upon him, and he had but a second left in which to make confession.

'Yes, yes,' he cried, trembling and quivering; 'I've been a villain. I've gone again' the laws o' God an' man. But I've straightened everythin', an' I didn't fight the case, as I might ha' done, an' ha' cost my nephew Joseph a mint o' money, an' perhaps ha' won it after all.'

Was Heaven appeased, he wondered, by this confession? The awful mist began to clear away, and he could see again.

'I'm a old man,' he muttered, 'an' I ain't long for this world--- not long. An' I'll mek up for what I done as was wrong. I'll mek up for it, if I ain't drove too hard.'



Young George was silent, being more than a little frightened by the old man's looks, and the sudden change in him.

'Don't you be too hard o' me,' said old George tremulously. 'I don't know how I'm a-goin' to get hum,' and he began to whimper. 'You help me hum, Mr. Banks, an' I'll mek up for everythin'. I'll mek up for it, if I ain't drove too hard. You help me hum, Mr. Banks.'

Young George, still a little in dread of the old man's sticks, and keenly watchful lest all this should be a *ruse*, approached him gingerly and took him by the arm. The poor old rascal was shaking like a leaf, and clutched weakly at his late private secretary. Considering the circumstances, the position was a curious one. The youngster resolving to leave him at the end of the lane, and so to run no risk of being seen in this anomalous position, helped him on, and the other turned slowly over in that clouded and stiff-jointed mind of his the conviction that it was useless and dangerous to try to evade the powers of Heaven any longer. And being altogether crushed and broken by the assaults of accusing conscience, and filled with superstitious fears of what might happen unless he made some sort of atonement, he hit upon a plan, and groaned over it, so terrible did it seem, and yet resolved upon it. Some dim mingling of texts about doing good to them that despitefully use you, and denying your own wishes—crucifying the desires—that was it—helped to the formation of this remarkable and dreadful resolution. The Bushell Hospital and Institution must go by the board, and he would divide his money equally—all that was left of it—between the man he had injured and the man who had robbed him, between Joe Bushell and this rascal of a late private secretary. It was a dreadful thing to think of, and the mere notion of it tugged at his very heart-strings, but surely, surely, it was all the more likely to be accepted on that account.

'Can you get along alone now, sir?' asked George the younger at the bottom of the lane.

'I think I can,' said George the elder, leaning on both his sticks again. 'Don't you be too hard o' me, Mr. Banks, an' I'll mek up to you for all the harm I tried to do you.'

With that he tottered away, leaving his late *employé* smitten with great bewilderment.

(To be concluded.)

## Our Astronomers' Hopal.

IN the sixteenth century men began to travel boldly across the ocean, whole fleets taking such journeys as until then had been only undertaken now and then by some daring sea captain. It was early in August 1492 that Columbus had set sail, in a ship of not quite a hundred tons burden, across the wide Atlantic; and seventy days later, on Friday, October 12, 1492, he sighted an island of the Bahama group (most probably Cat Island, though some maintain the claims of Turks' Island), and, supposing he had reached the Indies by a westerly route, gave to the insular region the name it still bears—the West Indies. Inexact measurements of the earth's globe, and imperfect means of determining his westerly range of travel, led to this utter misconception of the true position on the earth of the region to which his daring expedition had led him. So far as such occasional journeys were concerned, men might have continued to remain content with their imperfect astronomical knowledge. But when in the course of a few decades navigation extended, it became essential that seamen should have some means of determining their position on the ocean. Yet years passed, and though every sea captain could on any clear day or night determine with sufficient accuracy his latitude, or distance from the equator, no means had been devised for determining even roughly the longitude, or the distance east or west from any given point on the earth from which (as from Greenwich, Paris, or Washington in our own time) longitude may be measured.

The nature of the difficulty which in the sixteenth century, and still more in the seventeenth, exercised astronomers and seamen may be readily indicated. Imagine a captain in the open ocean without any knowledge of his position, but with instruments for determining the apparent positions of the heavenly bodies in the sky. Then on the first clear night he can observe the elevation of the pole star, and though the pole star is not actually at the pole of the heavens, the observation will give him a rough indication of his latitude. For the pole of the heavens is the point towards which the axis of the earth points, and it is easily seen that the nearer a place is on the equator (the great circle lying exactly midway between the ends of that axis), the nearer the visible pole of the heavens will be to the horizon. An observer who should pass uniformly from the equator to either pole of the earth, would find the pole of the heavens passing as uniformly from the

horizon<sup>1</sup> to the point overhead. Its arc distance from the horizon would all the time exactly correspond to his arc distances from the equator. So that if the pole star were exactly at the pole of the heavens, an observer, by determining its apparent height, would at once determine his latitude, or distance from the equator. And though the pole star does not occupy that precise position, yet it moves only in a small circle around the true pole, and by noting it either when just above or just below the pole, or when exactly to the right or exactly to the left of the pole, the true position of the pole itself becomes known, simply because the distance of the pole star from the pole is known. In the southern seas, where there is no star very near the pole, the case is not so simple, but even there any star circling at a known distance around the pole would give the southerly latitude. But as a matter of fact the sun is usually observed for the latitude. For his distance north or south of the equator on any given day of the year is known, so that by observing him at noon when he is at his highest and due south, either just above or just below the highest point of the equator on the sky, we learn the apparent height of this highest point of the equator. A line to this point makes of course exactly a right angle with a line to the pole of the heavens; and thus we learn the latitude as certainly in this way as we could by observing a star actually at the pole, if such a star there were; and as it is always more convenient to observe in the daytime than at night, it is in this way usually that latitude is determined. Moreover, although instruments were less exact and ingenious in the sixteenth century than now, and the position of the sun day after day with respect to the equator was less exactly determined, this method was as available (so far as general principles were concerned) at that time as at present.

But how should an observer, placed as we have supposed in the open sea, determine how far east or west he was of any given place on the earth? The aspect of the starlit heavens, and the daily motions of the sun and planets are almost exactly the same at stations in the same latitude, however far apart they may be. The motions of the moon, on account of her relative proximity to the earth, are very slightly different at different stations in the same latitude, but the difference is so slight that, without excellent instruments and the most perfect knowledge of the moon's motions, no observer could pretend to determine his longitude from observations of the moon even on land, far less from the unstable deck

<sup>1</sup> I take no account here of the effects of the refractive or bending action of our own air on the rays of light from a star, but suppose the observation *corrected for refraction*, as it is technically expressed.

of a ship at sea. The real difference between two stations far apart in longitude, that is, in an east and west direction, is as great as the difference between two stations as far apart in latitude; but whereas the latter difference is one which may be studied and determined at any time, the other is a difference depending entirely on the time. Thus, if A and B are two observers far apart in a north and south direction, either can at any time determine the apparent elevation of the pole of the heavens as seen from his station, and so learn his latitude. The difference between these two elevations is the same all the time. If A could telegraph to B, and *vice versâ*, either would give the other at any time the same news about the position of their respective poles. But if two observers, C and D, were in the same latitude and at stations far apart in longitude, say C far to the east of D, though C and D at any given moment would have the stellar groups very differently arranged with respect to the horizon, yet the aspect seen by C at any given moment would be shown to D after a certain definite time-interval had elapsed. It would be impossible for either C or D to tell how far east or west their respective positions were from Greenwich or other fixed point on the earth, or how far east C was from D, by mere observations of the heavenly bodies, however carefully such observations might be made (apart always from those exact observations of the lunar movements to which I have referred above). But if C could telegraph to D describing the exact aspect of his skyscape at any moment, then D, by waiting till his skyscape presented the same aspect, could tell exactly how far west<sup>1</sup> he was from C. If, for instance, a quarter of a day elapsed, D would know he was a quarter of the way round towards the west (measuring along their common circle of latitude, or along the equator from the point due south of C to the point due south of D), or perhaps I shall be better understood by saying that in this case a quarter rotation of the earth around her axis has carried D's place to the position before occupied by C. Or, if D had a clock showing true time at C's station, and so knew the precise epoch when the heavens seen by C would have such and such an aspect, he would, by noting how much later his own skies assumed that aspect, become aware how far west his position was from C's. But if his timepiece had gone wrong, he would be *pro tanto* mistaken. Such a mistake to a captain at sea might mean that a coast which he supposed to be far to the west or east of him would be close at hand, and in a short time he might run his ship upon it and be destroyed.

<sup>1</sup> The earth rotates of course from west to east, and so causes all the heavenly bodies to apparently rotate from east to west.

For safe navigation in open ocean, then, special knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies is required. Even to determine latitude well a seaman requires excellent instruments, and carefully constructed tables of the motions of the sun, moon, planets, and stars. For longitude he requires still more thorough investigation of the moon's movements (at least, for long-lasting ocean journeys), and in addition he should have most accurate time-measurers. How accurately time should be measured for this purpose will be inferred from the following considerations. At the equator an hour corresponds to fifteen degrees of longitude, or four minutes to one degree, or about  $69\frac{1}{2}$  nautical miles; thus four seconds correspond to one nautical mile and one second to rather more than 500 yards. In latitude 60 degrees north these distances are diminished one-half; but still, so small an error as a second in time corresponds to about 260 yards, and an error of seven seconds, such an error as the best stationary clock might easily acquire in a week, would correspond to an error as to position of more than a geographical mile!

It will be readily understood that even in the sixteenth century, when hundreds of ships crossed the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans, there was occasion for very careful study of the celestial movements, very excellent instruments, and very accurate time-measuring apparatus. How much greater was the need in the seventeenth century, when for every ship that had crossed the ocean in the days of Henry VIII., there were hundreds on its broad bosom.

It was thus that the necessity arose for national observatories, not intended, as many imagine, for the study of astronomy as a science (though the science of astronomy is undoubtedly advanced in a most important manner by such observatories), but for the survey of the heavens and the exact measurement of time. Precisely as navigation would be unsafe unless the terrestrial globe were carefully surveyed, and the true position of every coast line, nay, even of every rock and reef, accurately determined, as well as all changes which such coast lines, islands, rocks, reefs, &c., may undergo, so would navigation be unsafe unless the celestial globe, within which as it were the earth is suspended, had been carefully surveyed, and the true position of every star, the exact paths along which sun, moon, and planets travel, all accurately determined. And in passing it may be noticed that the work of a national observatory (where alone such survey of the heavens can be conducted) bears somewhat the same relation to the higher astronomical research, that the trigonometrical and topographical survey of the earth's surface bears to

the profounder studies of the geologist, the biologist, and the paleontologist.

Yet it was not till the year 1674 that any definite scheme for systematic survey of the heavens, in the interests of navigation and commerce, was planned in this country. It had been pointed out by a Frenchman, Le Sieur de St. Pierre, that if the motion of the moon as supposed to be seen from the earth's centre could be accurately predicted, then a seaman who should at any moment observe the exact position of the moon in the heavens, would know the precise instant of terrestrial time (say the true London time) at that moment. Thence, as the difference of longitude between two stations is measurable by the difference of time<sup>1</sup> between those stations, the latitude of the ship could be exactly determined. Charles II., to whom the plan was proposed by Le Sieur de St. Pierre, referred it to a commission of officers and scientific men. One of these, Sir Jonas Moore, sought the opinion of Flamsteed on the subject, Flamsteed being well known at that time as a skilful astronomer. Flamsteed stated that in his opinion the knowledge of the moon's motions at that epoch was far too inexact for the purpose intended. He said that 'even the places of the stars in existing catalogues were grievously faulty.' It was as though a geographer should have said that none of the charts used by navigators showed the positions of coast lines with any approach to accuracy.

Charles II., who really showed a most commendable zeal for science in this matter, was much struck by Flamsteed's remark, and very sensibly pointed out that if astronomical knowledge were thus defective, the best thing to be done was to set to work at once, and zealously to correct the defect.

Under the auspices, then, of the king of whom Rochester wrongly said that 'he never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one,' Greenwich Observatory was built, and in 1676 Flamsteed, who had been appointed Astronomical Observer,<sup>2</sup> at a salary of 100*l.* a year, entered into residence at the Observatory. The instruments which he principally used in his work as Astronomical Observer were not in use until 1689.

<sup>1</sup> That is, the difference between the time of noon, or of the coming to the south of any known fixed star, at those two stations. It should not be necessary to explain this, because the words 'difference of time' can bear no other interpretation, seeing that it is the same moment of absolute time at any instant all over the world and throughout the universe. Yet repeatedly I have been asked what astronomers can mean by the time being different at different stations. A rough way of expressing their meaning is by saying that the time of day is different at different stations.

<sup>2</sup> This title is still retained in official documents, and is undoubtedly a more suitable title than that of Astronomer Royal, seeing that astronomical surveying, not astronomical research, is the chief duty of the office.

And here it may be asked how it was that a much greater man than Flamsteed, a man who reached the zenith of his fame during Flamsteed's tenure of the office of Astronomer Royal, but had already attained a widespread reputation when Greenwich Observatory was founded, was not appointed to be Astronomical Observer. Whether the office was ever offered to Sir Isaac Newton or not, I do not know, but most assuredly, if it were so offered, it is most fortunate for science that the offer was not accepted. Probably Newton would not half so efficiently as Flamsteed have executed the observations which this observer made, though men inferior to either might have executed those observations as well as Flamsteed, or better. But certainly no one could have done Newton's work had he neglected it for the routine work at Greenwich. Yet we must not forget that without the systematic observations of Flamsteed, Newton would never have been able to place the theory of the universe on that firm basis whereon he established it in his 'Principia.' The architect, however great his genius, cannot complete his conceptions without the aid of the builder, any more than the builder can erect an edifice without the materials necessary for his work.

Flamsteed laboured at Greenwich under difficulties such as none of his successors have had to encounter. His salary, as already mentioned, was but one hundred pounds per annum, and even this pittance was often ill-paid. He had to buy or make his own instruments. To defray the expenses he thus incurred, he was obliged to take pupils. At first he observed with a sextant belonging to Sir Jonas Moore, who also lent him two clocks; some other instruments were lent him by the Royal Society. The sextant was of iron, and seven feet in radius. The clocks were constructed by Tompion, the most celebrated clockmaker of his day. The pendulums were thirteen feet long, and swung a complete or double vibration in four seconds (that is, beat two seconds, so that their length was four times the length of a pendulum beating seconds, or about thirteen feet). They were so constructed that they required winding only once a year. Flamsteed also brought with him from Derby to Greenwich a quadrant three feet in diameter. With these instruments, strangely in contrast with those now in use, Flamsteed began his labours at Greenwich on October 29, 1676.

I need hardly say that I do not here propose to give any detailed account either of the methods followed by Flamsteed and his successors, or of the instruments they employed in their work. But it may be interesting to notice how utterly unlike was the plan first followed from that now universally employed. Flam-

steed's first observations of the stars, or his survey of the heavens, was conducted much as a trigonometrical survey of a terrestrial tract is carried out. He measured with the sextant the apparent arc-distance separating a star from each of two stars (or from more than two) whose positions were already known, and thence calculated the position of the star. The method is very rough, and could lead but to imperfect results. At the present day, astronomers follow an entirely different and far more satisfactory plan. A telescope is caused to swing so as to sweep the meridian, that is, the circle on the heavens passing from the south point of the horizon to the point overhead, and thence to the north point of the horizon. Every heavenly body visible in our northern heavens must in its daily rotation around the polar axis of the skies cross the meridian once at least. (If it is one of the stars within 'the circle of perpetual apparition,' or stars near enough to the pole not to set when due north, the heavenly body crosses the meridian twice, once above the pole and once below it, in each diurnal circuit.) The telescope, then, which sweeps the meridian serves to show at what elevation and at what time any heavenly body crosses that circle of the heavens, and thus shows the body's distance from the pole, and its rotational distance from any fixed circle through the poles from which the astronomer may find it convenient to measure such rotations. Whereas, in the first method, the astronomer had to measure arcs in all imaginable directions; he has by the modern method to measure only vertical arcs, and these always along one and the same semicircle from south to north. The superiority of the modern method,<sup>1</sup> as respects uniformity of procedure and of result, will be manifest to all. There are other not less important advantages which only the mathematician can fully appreciate.

Flamsteed retained the office of Astronomical Observer to the end of his life, which occurred on the last day of the year 1719. His first observation was made on October 29, 1676; but it was not until September 11, 1689, that he began regular observations of stars on the meridian with a mural arc, an instrument so constructed as to swing on the face of a vertical north and

<sup>1</sup> I speak of this method as modern, but there are reasons for regarding it as, in principle, exceedingly ancient. For in the great pyramid, which was manifestly intended for astronomical observation (though afterwards cased over so that none who came after its owner's death should use it for that purpose), we find the great ascending gallery, 150 feet in length and 28 feet in height, constructed so as to bear precisely on the meridian, a long arc of which it commanded; while many of the details of this gallery are such as an astronomer intending it for the purpose indicated would have been certain to give to it, and such as on any other hypothesis appear to be without reasonable interpretation.



south wall (whence its name), and with a sweep of one hundred and forty degrees on the meridian.

The forty-three years of Flamsteed's tenure of the office did not pass without some unseemly quarrels, chiefly caused by the impatience with which contemporary astronomers awaited the publication of his results. We find him, in October 1700, writing thus to Dr. Smith, of Oxford:—'Briefly, sir, I am ready to put the observations into the press as soon as they that are concerned shall afford me assistants to copy them and finish the calculations. But if none be afforded, both they and I must sit down contented till I can finish them with such hands as I have; when I doubt not but to publish them, as they ought to be, handsomely and in good order, and to satisfy the world, whilst I have been barbarously traduced by base and silly people, that I have spent my time much better than I should have done if, to satisfy them, I had published anything sooner and imperfect.'

The impatience of his contemporaries, however, caused him to depart from the course on which he had thus determined. He drew an estimate of the extent of the work which had to be prepared for the press. This estimate was read at a meeting of the Royal Society on November 15, 1704, and was unanimously approved. Prince George of Denmark, Queen Anne's husband, undertook to pay all the expenses of publication, and a committee, consisting of Newton, Wren, and three others, was appointed to examine Flamsteed's manuscripts. The committee recommended that the observations should all be published. Flamsteed placed in their hands a copy of the observations so far made, but stipulated that no steps should be taken towards their publication. So, at least, he asserted afterwards; but it is clear the stipulation was not such as to prevent the work being sent to the printers as it was. When, however, he should have supplied the rest, Flamsteed broke his agreement with the committee, delaying the printing for no other purpose, so far as appears, but to obtain better terms.

In 1708 Prince George died, and a further delay ensued. But as Flamsteed himself showed no disposition to supply the required copy, complaints were made which led to the appointment of a board of visitors, consisting of the President of the Royal Society and such other members of the Council of that Society as he should deem fit to take part with him in the work of supervision. They were authorised to demand of the Astronomical Observator, six months after the close of each successive year, a true and fair copy of his annual observations, and also to direct him to make such observations as they should consider desirable. They were

also to inspect the instruments, and to see that these were maintained in proper and serviceable condition.

Professor Grant, in his excellent 'History of Physical Astronomy,' remarks on this important event in the annals of the Royal Observatory: 'The origin of the Board of Visitors is clearly traceable to the unfortunate misunderstanding that prevailed between Flamsteed on the one hand and his scientific countrymen generally on the other. It has continued to exercise its functions to the present day. The salutary influence of such a board of inspection is indisputable, for while on the one hand it serves to prevent the application of the resources of the Observatory to any unwarrantable purposes, on the other it has the effect of periodically relieving the conscientious astronomer from the responsibility attaching to the discharge of his onerous duties, and thereby operates as an encouragement to future exertion. It is gratifying to reflect that during the last hundred years, at least, it is only in the latter respect that the advantages resulting from the establishment of the Board of Visitors have been apparent.'<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1711 Flamsteed's observations were published in a folio volume. The incomplete catalogue of stars which Flamsteed had placed in the hands of the committee in 1704 appeared in this volume, notwithstanding his alleged stipulation that it should be regarded only as a pledge for his subsequent delivery of a complete catalogue into their hands. But there is no room for doubt that, even if the stipulation were made as alleged, it was not binding under the circumstances. Had the complete catalogue been placed in the printer's hands in reasonable time, there would undoubtedly have been no excuse for the issue of the incomplete one; but year after year had passed without any fulfilment of Flamsteed's agreement to complete the catalogue, and the course pursued by the Committee was the only one left open to them. If Flamsteed's stipulation could be regarded as under any and all conditions closing this course against them, the incomplete catalogue had no value as a pledge.

The quarrels which arose between Flamsteed on the one part and Newton and Halley on the other, were first made matter of

<sup>1</sup> At the ascension of William IV. a new warrant was issued, by which the constitution of the Board of Visitors was to some degree modified. The Royal Astronomical Society had then recently been formed, and received its charter at that time. As the new society was formed specially for the advancement of astronomy, whereas the Royal Society took all science (and more) as its province, and so might have for its president a man very slightly acquainted with astronomy, it was fitting that a share, at least, in the supervision of the national Astronomical Observatory should be assigned to the Society specially devoted to astronomy. Accordingly the two Societies—the Royal and the Astronomical—are, according to the new warrant, represented equally in the Board of Visitors.

public discussion in 1835, by Mr. Francis Baily. Finding in Flamsteed's own manuscripts and autobiography a number of statements injurious to the characters of Newton and Halley, Mr. Baily unwisely published what he called an 'Account of the Life of Flamsteed,' which involved in effect an *ex parte* and unjust attack upon those eminent men. In 1837 Mr. Baily published a supplement, in which he stated that he had 'sought in vain for documents which might tend either to extenuate or explain the conduct of Newton and Halley.' He cannot have searched very carefully, for such documents existed precisely where one would have expected to find them, namely, among Sir Isaac Newton's papers. Among these papers Sir David Brewster discovered a series of letters and other documents, completely exculpating Newton and Halley from the charges rashly brought against them by Mr. Baily, and placing the character of Flamsteed, their calumniator, in a very unfavourable light. Apparently the sole cause of Flamsteed's delay in the first instance, and anger with Newton and Halley in the second, was greed of money.

Albeit, Flamsteed did good work as Astronomical Observer. Professor Grant thus sums up his work : 'Flamsteed is universally admitted to have been one of the most eminent practical astronomers of the age in which he lived. His merits do not, indeed, appear at first sight so conspicuous as those of some of his illustrious contemporaries with whom he may be compared, although at the same time they are no less substantial. In carrying out views of practical utility, with a scrupulous attention to accuracy in the most minute details, in fortitude of resolution under adverse circumstances, and persevering adherence to continuity and regularity of observation throughout a long career, he has few rivals in any age or country. He was thus enabled to establish the fundamental points of practical astronomy upon a new basis, and to rear a superstructure which, for many years afterwards, served as a landmark of vast importance to astronomers. . . . As first astronomer of the Royal Observatory of Greenwich, he set an example to his successors the beneficial influence of which cannot for a moment be doubted; nor while that noble establishment continues to maintain its proud pre-eminence [high position?] among the institutions devoted to practical astronomy, will the labours of its original director, prosecuted with such unwearied perseverance throughout a long career, despite the depressing influence of constitutional ill-health [and the unrelenting hostility of a powerful faction<sup>1</sup>], cease to be held in respectful remembrance by his countrymen.'

<sup>1</sup> This was written at a time when it was supposed that the attack made by Mr.

Flamsteed was succeeded by Halley. But as all Flamsteed's instruments were removed from Greenwich, no observations could be made till 1721. On October 1 in that year Halley made his first observation with a transit instrument said to have been made by Dr. Hooke.

A greater astronomer than Flamsteed, perhaps inferior only to Sir Isaac Newton (certainly inferior only to him among the English astronomers of his day), Halley was by no means so skilful in the practical work of a sky-surveying observatory. In the first place, Halley was in his sixty-fourth year when he accepted the appointment. As Professor Grant remarks, it is surprising, when we consider his age, 'that he should have undertaken the discharge of duties of so onerous a nature as those attached to the situation of Astronomer Royal.' The habits of minute attention to details, required for successful work in practical astronomy, are not readily acquired in advanced life. But Halley seems to have had little original aptitude for such work, and indeed to have undervalued (a common fault) the qualities he did not possess. We may pay but little attention to Baily's severe criticism of Halley's observations as not worth printing, because Baily may have been to some degree prejudiced against Halley after reading Flamsteed's animadversions. But Maskelyne had earlier told Delambre that Halley's observations (extending from October 1721 to December 31, 1739) were hardly better than Flamsteed's—a severe criticism, when the rapid progress of improvement in the instruments of observation in those days is taken into account.

Halley died on January 14, 1742, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. During more than twenty-four months before his death he had made no observations,<sup>1</sup> a circumstance not to be wondered at when we consider how old he was. What one does wonder at is

Baily on Newton and Halley represented the true state of the case, instead of being a mere *ex parte* statement. I believe the view I have expressed in my sketch of Flamsteed's life, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, is sound—viz., that the necessity for publishing Sir David Brewster's refutation was scarcely a less misfortune for science than was Baily's original mistake in publishing his ill-considered attack. Scientific squabbles are degrading enough when they occur without being raked up a century afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> At a meeting of the Royal Society on March 2, 1727, Sir Isaac Newton, then President, called attention to the circumstance that Halley had not supplied the Board of Visitors, in accordance with the authority given them, with a true and fair copy, within six months after the lapse of each successive year, of the observations made during such year. He pointed out that the continued neglect of this regulation might be detrimental to the public interest. Halley, who was present, made the rather lame excuse that he thought it better to keep the observations in his own custody, so that he might finish the theory he designed to build on them before others could reap the benefit of his labours.

that, being too old to discharge the duties of his situation, he did not resign.

Bradley, who succeeded Halley as Astronomer Royal in 1742 (his nomination is dated February 2, 1742), was one of the ablest, perhaps the very ablest, of all who have held the office. While astronomy owes to him (as it does not to any other Astronomer Royal) some of the greatest discoveries which have adorned the science, these were such as belonged to the field of his labours as a practical observer. His discovery of the aberration of light was indeed made before he accepted the situation of Astronomical Observer at Greenwich; but in the prosecution of the observations which led to that discovery he was fitting himself for the position he afterwards held. His more difficult and less striking, but in reality more important,<sup>1</sup> discovery of the nutation of the earth's axis was made while he was at Greenwich.

It will serve to indicate the general character of the work at Greenwich, as well as to show what progress practical astronomy was making, to consider—but we must do so very briefly—the nature of these discoveries.

For guidance in navigation and travelling generally, as well as in the measurement of time for civil and other purposes, the stars and other heavenly bodies are regarded by the astronomer as sky-marks whose observed direction gives certain information as to position or as to time. But that the information should be trustworthy, the causes which may lead to erroneous ideas as to a heavenly body's direction must be understood and their effects corrected. Speaking generally, it may be stated that, in the first place, *not a single star visible in the sky at any moment is really where it seems to be; and in the second, every star's position on the star vault is constantly, though slowly, changing.* As it is the specific office of an Astronomical Observer to learn precisely where the heavenly bodies are, he must manifestly find out all the circumstances which might cause him to be deceived. Some of the sources of error are sufficiently obvious. A rough instrument, such as an ingenious schoolboy could construct in an hour or two, would suffice to indicate the deceptive effect of our own air, whose refractive action on rays of light causes every star to appear somewhat higher in the heavens than it really is. Other sources of error are less easily ascertained. Again, though the reeling of the earth like a gigantic top, under the attractions of the sun and moon, does not cause any star to appear in a direction in which it

<sup>1</sup> More important in its bearing on physical astronomy, though less important as regards practical observation.

does not actually lie, yet by constantly changing the position of every star with respect to the poles of the heavens (more correctly, by constantly changing the position of these poles on the star sphere), this motion causes a steady though slow change in the calculated position of every star. So also does the slow motion of each star (or sun) along its own special path in space.

The aberration of light is a displacement of the former kind, nutation a displacement of the latter kind. Light streams forth in all directions with enormous velocity from each star, while the earth rushes with enormous velocity round the sun. The latter velocity, though enormous, is but small compared with the former. Yet it has to be taken into account in determining the direction whence the light of a star comes, just as the velocity of a ship propelled otherwise than by a stern wind has to be taken into account in determining the direction in which the wind is blowing.<sup>1</sup> With a wind blowing from the side (the nautical reader will excuse my avoidance of technical terms) the forward motion of the ship causes the apparent wind to come from a point nearer that towards which the ship is travelling than is the point from which the real wind is blowing. In other words, the wind is made to appear less favourable than it really is. We may, in fact, regard the motion of the ship as producing a wind of equal velocity blowing dead against the ship's course, and this wind has to be combined with the real wind to give the direction of the apparent wind. The light coming from a star with a velocity of more than 180,000 miles per second has similarly to be combined with the effects of the earth's forward motion at the rate of about 18 miles per second; and the apparent direction from which the star's rays seem to come (in other words, the apparent position of

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of mention that Bradley was led to the interpretation of the aberration of the fixed stars by the recognition of precisely this analogous phenomenon. Dr. Robison, of Edinburgh, relates the story in his article on *Seamanship*. The following account is from Dr. Thomson's *History of the Royal Society*: 'When Bradley despaired of being able to account for the phenomena which he had observed, a satisfactory explanation of it occurred all at once to him when he was not in search of it. He accompanied a pleasure party in a sail upon the River Thames. The boat in which they were was provided with a mast, which had a vane upon the top of it. It blew a moderate wind, and the party sailed up and down the river for a considerable time. Dr. Bradley remarked that every time the boat put about, the vane at the top of the boat's mast shifted a little, as if there had been a slight change in the direction of the wind. He observed this three or four times without speaking; at last he mentioned it to the sailors, and expressed his surprise that the wind should shift so regularly every time they put about. The sailors told him the wind had not shifted, but that the apparent change was owing to the change in the direction of the boat, and assured him that the same thing invariably happened in all cases.' Bradley was quickly able to interpret the phenomena, and found in its interpretation that of the aberration of the fixed stars.

the star) is nearer to that point on the star-sphere towards which the earth is travelling than is the actual position of the star. So that, just as an exactly head wind and an exactly stern wind are the only winds not affected in apparent direction by a ship's motion, so a star lying exactly in the direction towards which, and a star lying exactly in the direction from which, the earth is moving, would be the only stars in the heavens seen precisely in their true position (so far, at least, as aberration is concerned). The greatest possible displacement due to this cause occurs in the case of stars situated anywhere on the great circle lying between the two points just named where there is no displacement. It is not great, simply because the earth's velocity in her orbit is but about the ten thousandth part of the velocity of light.<sup>1</sup> Still, it is not one of those exceedingly minute quantities which tax the astronomer's means of instrumental observation. It amounts, in fact, to about the ninetieth part of the apparent diameter of the moon.

Even if we only consider the effect of such a displacement as this, if undetected, to the seaman, it appears by no means of small importance. Supposing a star on the equator, and displaced on account of aberration either eastwards or westwards by the greatest amount which this cause of displacement can produce, or about  $20\frac{1}{2}$  seconds of arc. Then, since 15 degrees of arc on the heavens correspond to one hour of diurnal rotation, it follows that 15 minutes of arc correspond to one minute of time, and 15 seconds of arc to one second of time. Thus 20 seconds of arc correspond to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  seconds of time, and an error of this amount would be equivalent in the determination of a ship's longitude to an error of more than 620 yards. But in reality the effect of neglecting such a correction as that due to aberration is not to be measured in this way by its direct action. Indirectly, regarding the stars as skymarks by which the movements of sun, moon, and planets are measured, the correction due to aberration becomes of yet greater importance.

It should be noticed that Bradley's great discovery might have been based on Flamsteed's observations alone. For though Flamsteed himself failed to detect the aberration of the fixed stars, he made his observations so carefully and well, that from the simple study of his various observations of the several stars at different seasons, the amount of displacement caused by aberration can be

<sup>1</sup> If we take along the circumference of a circle an arc equal in length to about the ten thousandth part of the radius, and draw radii to the two ends of this minute arc, the angle between these radii will correspond to the maximum apparent displacement of a star due to aberration.

determined almost as exactly as from the best observations of recent times.

The nutation of the fixed stars is a displacement smaller in amount, and not affecting the direction in which the stars appear to lie, but the position of the earth from which we see them. The reeling motion of the earth detected by Hipparchus (though Ptolemy usually gets the credit of the discovery) is caused by the perturbing action of the sun and moon on the earth's spheroidal globe. Were the earth a perfect sphere, there would be no such motion. Nutation may be described as a quivering of the earth as she thus reels. Were the disturbing action of the sun and moon constant, this reeling would be uniform; but as the moon's path round the earth varies in position (in inclination, shape, &c.), the disturbing action varies, and thus the reeling varies in rate, and the slope of the reeling earth's axis varies also, or the axis of the reeling earth may be said to quiver. In reality, there is a small and relatively rapid reeling superadded to the great slow reeling. The axial slope of the small reel—so to describe what corresponds to the inclination of a reeling top's axis to the vertical—amounts only to about  $9\frac{1}{4}$  seconds, and each reel is accomplished in about  $18\frac{1}{2}$  years, whereas the slope of the great precessional reel amounts to about  $23\frac{1}{2}$  degrees, and each reel requires about 25,900 years. Thus the pole of the heavens revolves in 25,900 years in a great circle 47 degrees in diameter, while it also revolves around the mean position due to this precessional reeling in a circle—really an oval— $18\frac{1}{2}$  seconds in diameter, in a period of about  $18\frac{1}{2}$  years. All the stars are affected, so far as their position with respect to the poles is concerned, by these motions. The nutation thus introduces a correction of all stellar positions, which must be taken into account in all observations of the stars.

I have considered these discoveries by Bradley because, as I have said, they are the most important of all the discoveries (almost the only important discoveries) made by astronomers carrying out the systematic work of practical observation—in other words, attending to the business which they are paid to do.

Bradley's last observation at Greenwich was made on July 16, 1762. He was succeeded by Dr. Bliss, Savilian Professor of Geometry at Oxford, who had few of the qualifications necessary for the office of Astronomical Observator. He died early in 1765, his last observation having been made on March 15 in that year.

Bliss was succeeded by Maskelyne, whose first observation was made on May 7, 1765. He used the same instruments as Bradley, but he adopted a system better calculated to lead to



trustworthy and valuable results. He limited his observations to a select number of stars (besides, of course, the sun, moon, and planets). He observed these stars on every available occasion, and based on these observations a catalogue which, though containing but thirty-six stars, was far more accurate than any previously formed. This plan of observation he continued throughout the whole period of his tenure of office, his first observation being made, as already mentioned, on May 7, 1765, his last on December 31, 1810. His actual period of office was slightly greater than  $45\frac{3}{4}$  years, and has been surpassed only by the period during which Sir G. Airy held the office.

We owe to Maskelyne the establishment of the 'Nautical Almanac,' which first appeared in 1767. It cannot be said that the Royal Observatory had fairly begun (even) to fulfil the purpose for which it was established until the 'Nautical Almanac' appeared. During his entire period of office Maskelyne superintended the publication of the almanac.

When Maskelyne was made Astronomer Royal, there was no very eminent English astronomer to whom persons ignorant of the special duties of the office might have thought that the position should have been offered. Sir W. Herschel was teaching music until 1766, when he was appointed organist at Halifax, and his earliest regular observations were made in 1776. It need hardly be said that later, during at least the last twenty years of Maskelyne's life, there could be no comparison between him and Sir W. Herschel as astronomers. Maskelyne was the more precise surveyor, but his name is associated with none of the great discoveries which constitute the glory of astronomy. Of William Herschel it has been justly said, *cælorum perrupit claustra*, he burst the bonds of the heavens; he penetrated beyond the limits that had before restrained men's views, and searched boldly into the depths of the universe. Of Maskelyne we can only say that he helped to assign the true position of certain celestial sky-marks. But then this was the duty which Maskelyne was engaged to do; he did it honestly and well.

Eleven days after Maskelyne's last observation had been made, his successor, John Pond, made his first observation, January 11, 1811. Although his name is little known—indeed, scarcely known at all outside the ranks of professional astronomers—he was one of the ablest of his class. He extended Maskelyne's method of sidereal astronomy to more than 1,000 stars, his catalogue being 'generally admitted,' says Prof. Grant, 'to be one of the most accurate productions of the kind that has ever been given to the world.' Fine instruments by Troughton were employed by him,

and in the course of a controversy with Brinkley as to the distances of the fixed stars he invented a method of observing stars by reflection at the surface of mercury which notably increased the accuracy of certain orders of observations.

During Pond's tenure of the office the career of Sir W. Herschel came to its end, and that of his almost equally distinguished son began. When Pond retired from office, in the autumn of 1835, Sir John Herschel was already recognised as England's greatest astronomer. Fortunately for science, no one was so ill-advised as to propose that this eminent man, already deeply engaged in the researches which have rendered his name illustrious, should be appointed to the office rendered vacant by Pond's retirement. (Fortunately for science, at least, on the assumption—doubtless incorrect—that, if he had been offered the appointment, he would have left his congenial field of labours to accept others of far less scientific importance, for which he was far less fitted.) A successor to Pond was sought for among men already working in the same field, that is, already engaged in the work of exact surveying of the heavens. A most fortunate choice was made in the selection of George Biddell Airy, who, during his tenure of office (the longest hitherto,—by a few weeks, as compared with the next, Maskelyne's), has done more than any of his predecessors, save perhaps Bradley, to give to Greenwich its present high position among national observatories. He was already eminent in his special department of astronomical work, having ably directed the Cambridge Observatory during seven years. He had there introduced two features, unknown till then in the work of public observatories, viz., the reduction of all observations by the observer himself instead of subordinates, and the systematic observation of the planets—a department of astronomy long neglected at Greenwich.

Space does not remain for the description of the special work of Sir G. Airy. What remains must be devoted to some remarks on the mistaken ideas which many seem to have formed respecting the duties of the office, and on the unsuitable and in many cases preposterous selections made by newspaper writers for a successor to Airy.

The late Professor De Morgan, in his 'Budget of Paradoxes,' relates an amusing story about Flamsteed, the first of our Astronomers Royal. An old woman who had lost a bundle of linen came to Flamsteed to learn its whereabouts, being under the impression that it was one of the duties, if not the chief duty, of an Astronomer Royal to answer such questions as are customarily addressed by ignorant persons to astrological charlatans. Flam-

steed, proposing to amuse himself at the old woman's expense, 'drew a circle, put a square into it, and gravely pointed out a ditch near her cottage, in which he said it would be found.' He meant, says De Morgan, to have given the woman a little good advice when she came back; but unfortunately for his purpose, the bundle was found in the very place which he had indicated. It is added, though De Morgan does not mention the fact, that Flamsteed determined thenceforth to have nothing to do with astrology even in fun.

It would seem, from much that has been written about the office of Astronomer Royal, that the general public are scarcely better informed on the subject than the old lady who mistook the Astronomer Royal of her time for a conjuror. Persons were named as likely to succeed Airy who would have been as ill-fitted for the office as a sea captain for a generalship, a general for the command of a fleet, or an historian for the office of prime minister. Even those who have rightly apprehended that the office is one requiring special training, as well as original aptitude and capacity, have in many cases failed to note that such special training as observers in any great observatory may obtain, though fitting them for the charge of ordinary observatories, may not by any means fit them to take charge of a great national observatory.

It must not be supposed that I make these remarks in depreciation of any of those who were named as likely to succeed the Astronomer Royal in the office to which Mr. W. M. Christie, formerly first assistant at Greenwich, has been appointed. Most of those who were thus named were persons who, by their method of life and study, removed themselves from even the possibility of being thought of in connection with the office, and, as it were, declined to have it offered to them. There is one road, and only one, in which a man, fit as respects capacity, can put himself in the way of the office, and even that road eventually branches out into several, one only of which leads to the goal in question. A skilful mathematician, with first-rate working powers, who shall begin, from the time of taking a high degree at the university, to work in one of the subordinate offices at Greenwich, taking shortly (in virtue of his position as a mathematician) one of the chief of these subordinate offices, may later become one of those from whom a new Astronomer Royal can be selected. But such a one may become, after a few years at Greenwich, the head of some important Government observatory, a position of greater emolument and perhaps of greater dignity, but one which, should he occupy it many years, unfits him for the office which is justly regarded as the highest which a professional astronomer can occupy. The reason

of this is not far to seek. The routine at Greenwich is necessarily unlike that at other observatories. Much of the work which must be done at Greenwich is by no means essential elsewhere; and in turn, much of the work which can be done with great advantage at other observatories (we are speaking all the time, be it understood, of Government observatories) would be entirely out of place at Greenwich. Now, even though the system at Greenwich were thoroughly stereotyped, which is far from being the case, a few years' absence from Greenwich work would render even the ablest astronomer less fit to take charge of our great national observatory than one who had been engaged in superintending such work during those years. Seeing, however, that the system at Greenwich, though to all intents and purposes fixed, does yet in details undergo modifications—that, in fact, being a living organisation, it *grows*—we can readily see that even the most skilful astronomer can only retain the fullest fitness for the office of Astronomer Royal by remaining at Greenwich, and by working continuously under the direct supervision of the actual holder of that office. When such a man, otherwise possessing the requisite capacity, succeeds to the position of Astronomer Royal, there is the greatest chance that the change will cause no hitch, even for the shortest period, in the work of the great national observatory: and this, after all, is the point in which the public is most interested.

The fitness (in these respects) of the appointment recently made will therefore be readily understood, and it will be seen also why several of those named by persons unacquainted with the requirements of the office were, for various reasons, more or less unsuited for the post. The greatest master living of the mathematics of astronomy, although at the head of an important observatory, would not only have been in all probability a less efficient Astronomer Royal than one who had been working for years at Greenwich, but his transference to the office (had he been willing to accept it) would have been a serious loss to science, because in the office of Astronomer Royal he would have been unable to continue those researches in which he has few or no equals. One of the greatest professors (if not actually the greatest) of pure mathematics could as ill be spared from his special labours, even if he possessed the knowledge of routine work essential in the chief of our national observatory. It should hardly be necessary to say that the indefatigable director of the 'Nautical Almanac,' although for a long time the head (and a most skilful and successful head) of a fine private observatory, would be ill-placed as chief at Greenwich, if for no other reason, for this—that he is the fittest man living for the post he actually holds.

Again, there are men who, by their telescopic researches in what may be called the physics of astronomy, by spectroscopic observations and discoveries, by their analysis of the great mass of observations gathered by others, and in other ways, are deservedly regarded as having notably advanced our astronomical knowledge, who would yet be altogether unfit to take charge of even the commonest routine work at Greenwich; and even though they could, would only do so at the expense of more important work for which they are pre-eminently fitted. Most of these, indeed, are independent workers in astronomy, who are not willing (and have through the whole course of their lives shown that they are unwilling) to accept what would be to them the comparative slavery of a salaried office.

One astronomer, indeed, and only one of those who were mentioned as likely to succeed the Astronomer Royal, could have taken his place without loss to the public, either, on the one hand, because of unfitness for the post, or, on the other, because no one else could so well do work given up that the office might be taken. I refer to an astronomer who has quite recently left the charge of one of our most important colonial observatories to take a leading astronomical office at Oxford. That astronomer had for several years held the position of chief assistant at Greenwich, and, had the Astronomer Royal resigned four or five years ago, would almost certainly have succeeded him. But, as I have already pointed out, an absence of several years from Greenwich diminishes an astronomer's fitness for the special duties (in particular, the superintendence of routine work) belonging to the office of Astronomer Royal. Without touching in any way upon the question of relative capacity, zeal, or energy, I may say that in all probability the public interests were better served by the appointment to this office of the younger man who has during the last few years held the position of chief assistant at Greenwich.

I have touched on the erroneous ideas which many persons entertain respecting the duties of an Astronomer Royal. I may conveniently conclude by noting the admirable way in which the actual duties of the office have been discharged by the venerable astronomer who has so long held that important position. If we do not find his name associated with striking discoveries respecting the sun and moon, planets, stars, and comets, it has been because the duties of his office have been inconsistent with the researches by which alone such discoveries can be effected. An Airy has no *right* to undertake such work as has ennobled the names of a Newton or a Herschel. His duty to the nation, in whose service he has taken office, requires that he should devote his energies first

and chiefly to the control and superintendence of that systematic observatory work which is so important to the nation as forming the very basis of our commercial system. Not only the property, but the lives of millions depend more or less directly on the accuracy and completeness with which that system is carried out. I may add what may seem to some a commonplace consideration, which presents, however, the common-sense view of the matter, that the nation pays a certain sum yearly to the Astronomer Royal for the performance of certain work, and therefore has a right (*each one of us has a right*) to claim that that work and no other shall be done—no other work, at least, which would prevent that work from being well and thoroughly done. An Astronomer Royal who should devote any large portion of his time to independent researches, such as the Herschels, Huggins, Lassell, Draper, and other private astronomers' have undertaken, might become very eminent for his discoveries in physical astronomy, but it would be at the expense of the country in whose service he had accepted office, and in the opinion of all right-minded men his distinction would be to his discredit. The Astronomer Royal who has just completed his long term of office has achieved—though his official career has not been absolutely without mistakes—a worthier reputation, in this, that he has worked with such zeal and energy in the duties properly belonging to his office that even the hardest-working professional astronomer might well hesitate to succeed him in a position always important, but which he has made most arduous.

RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

## Rival Queens.

### I.

OF all arts in the world, that of landscape painting is to my mind the pleasantest to practise. How the greatest of landscape artists—Turner, for instance—may have felt when at work, I do not guess; but to the average man who is not great, but only placidly loves his art, there is no huge mental strain in it, no surprising upheaval of the spirit. There is a good deal of the luxury of summer idling in your labour, Messieurs the landscape artists. I have known those amongst you who can spend their three or four days together in ‘absorbing the sentiment’ of a landscape before setting to work at its transference to canvas—a pleasant occupation.

Permit me to introduce to you a comrade so engaged.

A broiling day, if you please, to begin with. A day so hot that if you should lay a hand upon any bit of metal long unsheltered from the sun you would be likely to remove it hastily. A day so hot that, seen through any trellis-work of leaves or boughs, the air visibly palpitated, and the distant blue of the landscape waved. A day the successor of so many days of drought, that the banks of the Thames showed three feet of baked and fissured earth between the lowest grass of the meadows and the water-line. A day so hot that the very birds were silent in the shade, and the solitary swan in sight, with two dirty grey little cygnets just behind her, would not venture into the sunshine, but kept up a lazy circle under the protecting shadow of one monstrous elm.

Gabriel Browne was two-and-twenty, heart-whole, and free from care. He was swarthy of complexion, and clean shaven, and he wore his hair long. He was dressed in white linen of a fashion we might laugh at nowadays; and, with a straw hat at the back of his head, he lay in a punt in the shadow, in an attitude naturally picturesque. The Princess Royal was a baby at this time, and Her Most Gracious Majesty was the almost girlish darling of the nation. Mr. Gladstone was a young man of astonishing promise, and Mr. D’Israeli was already a young man of astonishing performance. From these historical premises you may yourself attire Gabriel in garments of a suitable cut. Any reminiscence of an original illustrated edition of ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ will serve.

It was not so universally the fashion to consult nature when one professed to paint her in those days as it has since become, but Gabriel had in theory joined the more advanced spirits of his time. Just now the weather was so oppressive, that instead of painting he was content to lie still and 'absorb the sentiment' of the scene before him. That sentiment was one of complete rest and ease; there was a suggestion of slumber in it and dreams of unusual calm, and Gabriel so successfully absorbed it, that he presently fell into a tranquil doze, and even snored a little. Attired as he was, you or I might have thought his figure rather quaint than noble, but then fashion has everything to do with those matters, and three young ladies who came that way peeped at him through the lattice-work of boughs and leaves, and admired him. He lay with one swarthy cheek, flushed with health's own colour, pressed in a brown and shapely hand, and his handsome face was turned to the bank, so that the three young ladies had each a good view of him in turn.

Each of these three young ladies carried a small round basket, and each basket was filled with ripe cherries, which they ate demurely as they came along. And one of them having a cherry-stone between her rosy lips when she peeped at the slumbering artist, took it between her finger and thumb, and delicately poisoning it in an orifice in the leafy screen, by a pressure of the said thumb and finger, half lucky and half dexterous, sent it away with so much precision that it struck the very tip of the sleeper's chiselled nose, and stilled its somnolent music on a sudden. The sleeper awoke, and rubbed the place lightly with the palm of his hand, and then, sitting up, he looked inquiringly about him. The young lady who had fired the shot let off a musical laugh, and Gabriel, rising, said, 'Aha!' in a tragedy tone, seized his punting pole, and with a dexterous shove shot the punt from shade to sunlight, and back to shade, and came smiling through a little arch of leaves. When he saw the three he became suddenly grave and executed a courtly bow. The disturber returned him a sweeping curtsy in the manner of high comedy, and her companions answered the young man's salute with the measured gravity of propriety as taught in the best finishing schools. They were a charming trio, and they were so grouped and contrasted that they set each other off to great advantage. The disturber was a piquante little hussy with sparkling eyes and a dimple, and her complexion a blending of roses and cream. The one to her left was slight and fair, with a face like a lily, and violet eyes of gravity, and a sweet mouth. The one to the right was a princess to look at, at the least; a daughter of the sun, who might have taken



the saying of Solomon's love for a motto: 'I am black but comely.' Royal eyes she had, black as night, with jetty lashes and ebony brows above them, finely pencilled. Her lips were scarlet and proudly set, her head was a little disdainfully carried, her whole figure fell into natural lines of royal repose. Her companions were undeniably English, and she was as undeniably un-English.

'Gabriel,' said the piquante owner of the dimple, 'this is Miss Gaston; this is Miss Gilray. Inez—Mary—my brother Gabriel.'

Gabriel bowed again, and feeling it necessary to say something, remarked promptly that the day was fine. The ladies assented to this statement, and Gabriel followed up his success by observing that at that time of year the country was at its best. Meeting no rebuff on that ground either, he felt his conversational powers languish, and in default of something better to say, he asked if the ladies would care to go upon the river. The ladies would like to go upon the river of all things, and Gabriel found himself suddenly pledged to work in place of pleasant *idlesse*. A roomy old boat being moored near at hand, they all embarked, and the artist pulled up stream, and wished himself out of his bargain. The ladies arranged themselves in attitudes of repose and ate cherries languidly. The inferior male creature tugged the old tub through the water and perspired, thinking ungratefully of the good fortune which had befallen him. The ladies murmured nothings, concerning bonnets and the new colour in ribbon. 'Feather-headed creatures,' said Gabriel inwardly. It was impossible to 'absorb the sentiment' of the surrounding scenery under these conditions.

'Sing something, Inez,' said little Miss Browne, when the cherries were all consumed and the baskets one by one committed to the wave.

'Pray oblige us,' said the lily lady, and with no ado the brunette beauty opened her coral lips and sang a song of Provence. Gabriel fell into the measured swing of the song, and his skulls kept leisurely time to it. The brunette's voice was a rich contralto, the cadences of the air were sweet and old-fashioned and simple, and it was sung as only an artist could have sung it. Gabriel began to think better of the situation.

'Thank you,' he said, when the song was over. He said it as if he meant it, and the grave Inez bowed.

'Now, Mary!' said Gabriel's sister, and settled herself placidly. The blonde beauty made no ado either, and sang an old English ballad in a clear soprano, with every note sparkling like a water-drop, and the whole sweet ditty running like a warbling brook.







*'Black but comely.'*



Gabriel thought better yet of the situation, and said 'Thank you' more eloquently than before.

'Now together,' said Gabriel's sister, and after a little consultation they fixed on an old duet of Dr. Arne's, and sang it, like mistresses of their business.

'Who are they?' thought Gabriel to himself. 'Miss Gaston? Miss Gilray?' glancing at them each in turn. 'Gaston sounds French, but she looks more southern than Marseilles. Inez sounds Spanish, and she looks Spanish.'

'Let us go back to luncheon,' said his sister, cutting his lazy thoughts adrift. He turned the boat, and pulled down stream leisurely; and having stopped at the punt to gather his artistic belongings, pulled on again, until the boat came to a smooth-shaven lawn with a pleasant red-brick house beyond it, the residence of Sir Gabriel Browne, some years retired from active commerce, and knighted by His Majesty King William the Fourth, in recognition, as it was popularly supposed, of his having made a pot of money. Sir Gabriel had, since his retirement, given himself up to the pursuit, not of art, but of artists. He had been stage-struck in his youth, as many a staid man of business had been before him, and he had not outlived his early reverence for actors. These, with artists, authors, composers, singers, kept his house fairly well filled from year to year. It was his proudest boast that he knew every actor and actress on the London stage. Actors and actresses were less numerous than now, and I dare say that Sir Gabriel's boast was not greatly exaggerated. High-priced warblers from the Opera, comedians and comédiennes, tragic performers male and female, authors grave and authors gay, with the critics who munched their bones for a living, and were none the less their friends, artists rising, risen, and set—all these Sir Gabriel knew, and loved to know and boast his knowledge of. It was nothing uncommon, therefore, for Gabriel the younger to meet strange faces at his father's house. But for his part the young man cared little for the crowd, and very rarely spent his time at home. He had a great distaste for London, which was near at hand, and an unaffected love for out-of-the-way places in warm southern countries, where he could live in the open air, and paint and idle the year round.

The new visitors were unlike the old, and Gabriel felt an interest in them. He caught his sister indoors alone and asked—

'Who are they?'

'They are Miss Gaston and Miss Gilray,' said the minx provokingly.

'What are they?' Gabriel asked.

'Actresses,' Jane replied. 'Rival queens.'

'They are very ladylike,' said Gabriel.

'Ladylike!' said Jane. 'Impudence! Inez is like a queen.'

'You're as thick as thieves,' said Gabriel. 'How long have you known them?'

'Ages,' said Jane. 'A fortnight. There! Let me go and take my bonnet off.' Then, being released, Jane stayed of her own free will to prattle about her friends, and she told what a lovely part Mary played, and what a beautiful dress she wore in the first act, and how good-natured and natural she was; and what a lovely part Inez played, and how grand she was in it, and what a kind-hearted girl she was when you really came to know her—'in a fortnight,' Gabriel interjected—but how frigid she had been at first, and so on, *ad libitum*.

Gabriel had no liking for actresses as a rule, and, indeed, considering his years, he vexed himself about the fair sex wonderfully little. But he surveyed these ladies with interest, and thought them both charming. Old Sir Gabriel drifted the talk on acting, and the ladies tugged it deftly off. He drifted back again, and once more they hauled him away. He showed signs of returning, and his son to rescue him plunged into talk of his own recent travels, rightly judging that a woman, even more than a man, might dislike to talk shop. The actresses welcomed this relief.

'What took you to Spain?' asked the brunette.

'A whim,' said Gabriel the younger. 'I resolved to follow the lines Wellington took there, and wherever he went I went and made sketches.'

'Did you go to Badajoz?' she asked.

'I stayed there a month,' he answered. 'I liked the place. It was full of interest, and I did a good deal of work there. I have a score of sketches or more done in Badajoz.'

'Will you show them to me after luncheon?' she asked him.

'With pleasure,' he responded. 'They are poor rough things, though, and I am afraid you will not care much for them.'

'Oh yes,' she said, seriously and simply. 'I shall care for anything that tells me about Badajoz.'

Luncheon over, he produced his sketches, and Inez went over them one by one, and listened to his descriptions of the place with an interest which flattered him.

'But I am going over old ground with you, Miss Gaston,' he said at length. 'You know the place?'

'I was born there,' she replied.

'And I have been trying to describe to you what you know far better than I!' he said, a little chagrined.

'No; not at all,' she answered. 'I was taken away from Badajoz before I was a year old.'

'Your name is French, I think?' said Gabriel.

'My father was a Frenchman,' she responded, and added with a restrained smile, 'I am quite a polyglot. My mother was an Algerian, my father a Frenchman. I was born in Spain, carried at twelvemonths old to Italy, and brought to England at the age of ten.'

'Inez,' said Miss Gilray, approaching, and drawing a tiny watch from her girdle, 'it is time to go.'

Inez rose obediently, and the three girls went out together. The visitors returned in a few minutes to make their adieux, and were gone. Gabriel gathered together his tools and went back to the punt, but this time he neither worked nor dozed. I do not think he even absorbed the sentiment of the landscape. Perhaps he had something else to think of.

## II.

THAT evening Gabriel made a careful search of the columns of the 'Times' in pursuit of two names, neither of which he could discover. The Misses Gaston and Gilray were not mentioned in any theatrical advertisement.

'Where do your friends play this evening?' he inquired of Jane.

'Mary is at the Haymarket and Inez at Drury.'

Gabriel scanned the journal again.

'They must be playing very subordinate parts,' he said, 'for neither of them is mentioned here.'

'Subordinate, you goose!' said Jane. 'They are the greatest actresses of the day.'

Gabriel shrugged his shoulders and laid down the paper.

'Curiously unknown to fame,' he answered.

'Look for Miss Galbraith,' said Jane; 'that is Inez. Now look for Miss Ray; that is Mary.'

'I see,' said Gabriel sapiently.

On the following afternoon he stated casually that he had some affairs to see to in London, that he should probably be kept late there, and should spend the night in town. Scarce had he gone when Jane discovered from the columns of the 'Times' that Inez was that night to appear as Cleopatra for the first time, and she worried her father until he promised to take her to hear and see. Having obtained the promise, she went about occasionally laughing to herself, and once or twice she went to a mirror and nodded at her own reflection, with a look of much simple cunning. During



the journey to town she smiled frequently, and once laughed outright, but refused any explanation of her high spirits. When she and her father were settled down in the theatre she produced a single-barrelled opera-glass, and through it shot arrowy observations to every corner of the house. After a time thus spent her face began to cloud a little, as if with disappointment, but suddenly she smiled to herself and laid her hand upon Sir Gabriel's arm.

'There,' she said, 'I told you so!'

'Told me what?' demanded Sir Gabriel.

'Do you know what brought Gab to town?' she asked, meeting query with query.

'No,' he answered.

'Then, I do,' said the sage in petticoats. 'I have not studied the workings of the male intelligence for nothing.'

'Oh!' said Sir Gabriel, whose brain began to be sleepily reminiscent of the after-dinner bottle of fine old crusted.

Pretty Miss Jane levelled her single-barrel again, and having gazed awhile, she arranged the curtains of her box in such wise that she could see the desired corner without being seen from it. Then from her ambuscade she kept stealthy watch upon the unconscious Gabriel, her brother, whose business in town had apparently been accomplished earlier than he had hoped.

Cleopatra has long been a favourite subject among painters, but so far as I know the Egyptian Queen has never been credibly represented on canvas. That she should be credibly represented on the stage is almost an impossibility, for though the actress may feign all her contradictory emotions passably well, she must herself be a Cleopatra before she can fuse into homogeneity the caprice, the tenderness, the rage, the folly, the pathos, and the passion of the part. Now, Cleopatra, either as she was or as Shakespeare drew her, was a *lusus naturæ* of the rarest sort. Nature has moulded but one or two such women, and may break the die as soon as she pleases, for aught I care. But she has used the die so sparingly that we have some reason to be thankful. Picture to yourself the condition even of a rural parish in which the women were all of that pattern.

Now, to Inez Gaston the part of Cleopatra presented itself as a chance for being real once in a way. When she came upon the stage, the very character of her beauty gave her a sort of claim of kinship with the part. It is hard sometimes to hear a plain and elderly female raved about in the language of youthful passion by a stage lover, but here Antony's infatuation seemed not merely natural but inevitable. Cleopatra's rage for Antony was less understandable, for the man who stood for that worthy warrior and regal

lover, though personable enough, was something of a stick, and acted as though he acted. And here, by the way, was a thing worth notice. Antony the man was really in love with Cleopatra the woman, and she knew it, and disliked him and despised him. Whenever she touched him on the stage he thrilled all over, and this, in place of lending him fire, made him

All over wooden like a piece of wood.

It was incomprehensible to Gabriel how any man in the world should miss inspiration from so glorious a creature, and Gabriel thought he could better have played the part himself. When Inez was off the stage the play lagged for him. When she came on again he brightened, and fed his eyes, trained to beauty, upon her beauty, and his ears with her wonderful voice, and his heart with a honeyed painful sweetness, the like of which no enjoyment of a mere theatrical spectacle ever brought or ever will bring. But Gabriel was only two-and-twenty, had never been in love in his life, and had no guess of what was coming.

The petticoated sage watching from her ambuscade was of opinion that she knew all about it, and indeed she was very nearly right, and had good data to calculate upon. She noticed, by aid of the single-barrel, that Gabriel looked triste and bored whenever Cleopatra left the stage, and that he brightened into renewed interest whenever she came back to it. The demurely delighted watcher was herself a woman, and found, therefore, small delight in watching Cleopatra, who was after all no more than an abnormally developed self, with a heathen training; but being a woman, she took the keenest pleasure in watching the nineteenth-century man in the act of falling in love with the nineteenth-century actress, whilst he believed that he was only interested in the theatrical presentment of an historic episode.

The night was a great triumph for Inez, and the house resounded again and again with mimic thunders of applause. When we are helping to make a noise in honour of some great artist who has richly pleased us, there is a small chance of our sharing in his sense of triumph, but it is only the applauded one who really hears the music in the thunder. As Inez swept the house with one veiled glance of triumph, Gabriel's eyes encountered hers. He was standing to applaud, and his face was flushed with enthusiasm and a rapture for which he found no name, nor cared to find any. Her eyes thanked him, and he felt the thanks as plainly as though they had been spoken in words. But the glance stilled his plaudits none the less. When an unseen hand drew back the curtain to make way for the actress's exit, she sent him a farewell glance, and

disappeared. His was the last face she looked at. The petticoated sage saw his enthusiasm and chuckled. The thunders had awakened old Sir Gabriel, who had indeed found his slumbers most inconsiderately broken in upon all the evening, and was a little grumpy in consequence. He abused the performance on the way home, and declared that the art of acting was going to the dogs. Reaching home, he consoled himself with brandy and water for the stage's decadence, and went almost cheerfully to bed.

Gabriel stayed away from home for a week, and went every night to the theatre. He became awake to his own condition, and knew that he was in love, and rather rejoiced in the sensation so far. On Sunday he went home, and Jane, with eyes dancing and lips grave, trusted that he had got satisfactorily through his business. He said he had, and they went quietly to church together and kept their own counsel, each of them. When they got back, who should be there but Inez? Gabriel was restrained and awkward in her presence for a time, but the old knight having gone away for his Sunday afternoon's nap, and Jane having left her friend to Gabriel's care, the two were alone, and he woke up and told her eloquently how charmed and delighted he had been at her performance. She had seen him every night at the theatre, and his eyes had told a tale too plain for any woman to misread. They talked almost like lovers already. Gabriel, untaught to woo, perhaps wooed all the better. There was confusion, not altogether unpleasing, when their eyes met—and they met often. Their speech dropped into quiet undertones, at times. '*C'est le premier pas qui coûte,*' says the proverb. Perhaps Inez had been in love before, and so found the way beyond love's boundaries more easily than a novice could have done. Poor Gabriel never had crossed those boundaries till now, and knew nothing of the quagmires and pitfalls which are sometimes found within them. He knew that he was on enchanted ground, and that was all.

To put away mystery, Inez had had a thousand lovers, as was natural, and one love. He had turned out a scoundrel; and when he had lived upon her so long, and lived apart from her so profligately, that she could bear him no longer, she gave Monsieur Paul notice that he had better disappear. There was that in her eyes which persuaded Monsieur Paul to take her at her word, and Madame Paul at one-and-twenty was a free woman, except for a tie which was unknown to all but herself and her husband. No one is so foolish as to suppose that 'bigamy' would have been much of a word to conjure with in Cleopatra's case. Inez listened and found Gabriel's voice sweet to her ears. There was an almost boyish candour and innocence in his fine eyes, and she knew that

here was a man to be trusted. If she could once win that honest and simple nature, she could hold it—that she knew; and she was in a fair way to win it. She let Gabriel believe that she was weary of the stage. That pleased him, for he could not bear to think of his wife being an actress, and he had already begun to have visions of a home of his own with Inez as its mistress. She was all pastoral in her longings; a quiet cot beneath ‘some boundless contiguity of shade’ was all her aspiration. Gabriel thought—she meant him to think—how sweet it would be to share that calm seclusion. She went to church in the evening with her host and Jane and Gabriel, and was a pattern of unobtrusive devotion. It was not all acting, for she had set her heart upon Gabriel, and felt secure of him already, and was tranquil when he was near her.

On the following day she left, and Gabriel, to Jane’s infinite amusement, again had business in town, and in the evening he not only saw Inez play, but had the audacity to run out at the fall of the curtain to see her drive home. There was a little crowd about the stage-door, but she saw him when she came out and gave him a bow and a smile. Once inside the carriage she smiled no more, but sat with her beautiful face stern and hard. For somehow she had fallen a-thinking of Monsieur Paul, and her heart rose up in rebellion against all thoughts of remaining duty to that discarded scoundrel. Tuesday night came, and Gabriel was in his place in the theatre once more, and once more he waited at the stage entrance to see her away. This night it rained, and there was no crowd, but only one companion to Gabriel’s watching—some hanger-on about the theatre, the young man thought. He was a seedy, foreign-looking fellow, in a slouched hat and an overcoat with a collar of mangy fur. He wore a great black moustache, and his chin and cheeks had not been shaven for a week or thereabouts. His boots were broken, and his aspect was jaded, but he bore himself with a swaggering air, and twirled a cheap cane about in his hands like a dandy. When the door opened, and Inez appeared, the seedy stranger took off his hat in the rain and bowed to her.

‘Ah!’ she said, in a tone which might have meant anything, and drew back a little within the shelter of the door. The seedy stranger bowed again.

‘I am here, madame,’ he said, speaking in French.

‘So I see,’ she answered, in the same language. ‘You are too late to-night. What is your address?’

‘Grick Strit, Soho Sqvar,’ said the stranger, and named a number.

'At twelve to-morrow,' she said, and, turning, caught sight of Gabriel standing close by. She reached out her little gloved hand to him. 'You will catch cold, Mr. Browne,' she said, with a bright smile. 'Good-night.'

She stepped into her carriage and was whirled away. The seedy stranger looked at Gabriel.

'Do you know Madame Galbrait, sare?' he asked, in Frenchman's English. Gabriel looked at him, buttoned his overcoat at the neck, and made no answer. 'She is ver' generous ladee,' said the seedy man. 'I am *perruquier*. I make—veegs, what you call?—yes, veegs for her. Good-night, sare.'

What should have prompted Monsieur Paul to that gratuitous unnecessary lie? Perhaps Monsieur was natively a liar, and liked the exercise of his best function. Perhaps he thought he might serve a purpose. It was not worth Monsieur Paul's while to spoil any game his wife might play, until, perhaps, she had played it far enough to be compelled to play into his hands. And Monsieur was a cautious player, and never missed a point in any game he played—if he could help it.

### III.

So here was Monsieur Paul back again, like the proverbial bad penny. Inez had flattered herself that she had fairly frightened him away for good and all. He had evidently recovered from his panic, and would have to be frightened again. Terrible thoughts rolled through the beautiful woman's mind as she lay that night in the dark. Was it worth while merely to frighten him? Had she not warned him fairly and fully?—given him money enough to live on reputably for years—to make a fortune with by industry and self-denial, and the aid of his own keen wits? Two thousand pounds—all her savings—had gone to Monsieur Paul, and a promise with them that if ever Monsieur came back she would kill him. She had meant it when she said it, and her faithless and profligate scoundrel of a husband had fully acknowledged that fact in his own mind. If she gave him money again, the hold he had upon her would be strengthened terribly. He would think she was afraid of him, as indeed she was, now that Gabriel had stepped into her world. It was bitter to have a glimpse of peace after such a life as hers. The law would give her no protection or freedom from Monsieur Paul without an exposure which would lay her past miseries open to all the world. She would be her own administrator of justice, then. She had warned him once, and now she

would warn him once more, and if he crossed her again he must pay the penalty.

There was no sleep for Inez that night.

In the morning she dressed plainly and veiled herself heavily, and sat alone, burning with impatience. When the time for which she waited drew near, she went out on foot, and walked resolutely to the address her husband had given.

Monsieur Paul was within? Yes. Would madame enter? A mean parlour, with cheap fineries of gilded mirrors stuck about the walls, and prints of leering, half-clad beauties of the fleshiest school, whose good looks were of the German-lithographic type. A threadbare carpet, a tawdry table-cloth strewn with cigarette ends, winter hangings of faded crimson at the dirty windows, an empty cognac bottle on the mantelpiece, and a scent of stale brandy and tobacco-smoke upon the air. Enter Monsieur Paul in a shabby dressing-gown and slippers, a wrecked *roué* of five-and-thirty.

‘My soul! good-day,’ said Monsieur. Madame inclined her head, and then lifted her veil, showing a pale face and burning eyes. She said not a word, and he forbore to look at her whilst he spoke, save for a shifty glance now and again shot her way. For her part, Inez fastened her glance upon Monsieur and never moved it for a second, so that whenever he shot his shifty glances at her he met her burning eyes and looked away again. ‘You will demand of me, probably,’ he said, ‘why it is that I return. I made a promise, and I break it. Why? In a word, it is that I am starving.’ He paused, but she neither spoke nor moved. ‘Will you take a chair?’ She stood before him still. ‘Eh, bien! I beseech you to believe that I do not willingly intrude myself. My little speculations have been all unfortunate. I have confided in men who have deceived me, and I have been cruelly defrauded.’

He ventured to look at her again, but there was no change in her regard.

‘Will you help me once more? Will you give me one poor hundred pounds and a passage to New York?’

‘No,’ she said.

‘Will you give me fifty pounds and a passage to New York?’

‘No,’ she said again.

‘Inez,’ said Monsieur Paul, ‘I despair, and when men despair they are dangerous.’

‘It is I who am dangerous,’ said Inez, ‘not you.’

‘I am dangerous,’ said Monsieur Paul. ‘I am very dangerous.’

I can claim all, and I come to you like a beggar for a little. I remember the promise I made, and I am modest ; but if you deny me——

‘Do you remember the promise I made?’ she asked.

‘I have not forgotten,’ he responded. ‘You said if I came back you would kill me. That is mere melodrama. Wives do not kill returning husbands, off the stage ; and if you should kill me, you will only be a day or two before hunger. I am not precise to a day. Whether it is to-day or next week, it’s all the same to me.’

‘Regard me well,’ she said. He tried to look at her, but his shifty eyes refused his will. ‘I am here to warn you—I have no other purpose than that. So surely as you cross my way again, I will throw you out of it. If I am driven to a great crime, I would willingly have a worthy motive. You do not give me such a motive—yet.’

‘I cannot leave London,’ he answered, sullenly, ‘without money.’

‘London,’ she said quietly, ‘has holes enough for you to hide in—to die in, if you will be so good.’

‘Do you think,’ he asked, ‘that I will stay in London, knowing that you live in luxury whilst I starve?’

‘Live where you will,’ she answered, not raising her voice one tone, or quickening her speech in a syllable. ‘Starve where you will. Die where you will. When you wish to commit suicide, why trouble me? Any bridge upon the river will help you to an easier euthanasia than I can offer. When next you come to me, you commit suicide. You walk to your death with your eyes open.’

‘Bah!’ he returned, though his pale face and cowardly lips were twitching. ‘This killing is not so easy, and it entails unpleasant consequences in civilised lands. Look you, madame, I have drawn up a little paper, and have laid it in the hands of a friend. If I should be found dead some day, that paper will be read, and it will tell that Inez Gaston—Inez Paul—Inez Galbraith—is—you understand?—a murderess.’ She looked fixedly at him. ‘I am not a fool,’ he said, ‘to neglect so poor a precaution.’

‘Very good,’ she answered quietly. ‘When next you come to me, I shall know that you are ready. It will not be like killing a man. And now—I am weary of you, and I will go.’

Should the mere fact that she spared this man to live rob her of all happiness?

‘You will not go yet, madame,’ said he, placing himself between her and the door. For all answer she dropped her veil, and, laying a hand upon the frayed bell-rope which hung beside her

she pulled it calmly. Her eyes being no longer plainly visible to frighten him, Monsieur Paul glared hard at her until the woman who had admitted her entered the room.

‘I am ashamed to give you so much trouble,’ said Inez; ‘will you open the door for me?’

She drew out her purse, and, taking a coin from it between her thumb and finger, offered it to the servant, who took it with a glance at Monsieur Paul and led the way. The woman was already clear of the door, and Inez was following, when her husband suddenly precipitated himself upon it, closed it with a bang which shook the house, turned the key, withdrew it, and put it in his pocket. She made a step towards him, and he recoiling, she rapped upon the door, and, raising her voice a little, said,

‘Madame, be so good as to bring a policeman.’

‘Yes, madame,’ said the servant, in a frightened voice, and, standing still, husband and wife heard her hastily fumbling at the hall door. With a look of baffled hate and rage M. Paul produced the key, unlocked the door, and threw it wide.

‘You have won, madame,’ he said, ‘but there remain some few strokes to be played. *Au plaisir.*’

She left the room proudly and calmly, without a word. The old woman was still nervously fumbling at the door with trembling hands.

‘Permit me, madame,’ said Inez, and passed out, and so went home. Whatever the law said, should such a wretch as Monsieur Paul divorce her from all hope of Gabriel?

(*To be concluded.*)



## Jocosa Upra.

IN our hearts is the GREAT ONE of Avon  
   Engraven,  
 And we climb the cold summits once built on  
   By MILTON.

But at times not the air that is rarest  
   Is fairest,  
 And we long in the valley to follow  
   Apollo.

Then we drop from the heights atmospheric  
   To HERRICK,  
 Or we pour the Greek honey, grown blander,  
   Of LANDOR ;

Or our cosiest nook in the shade is  
   Where PRAED is,  
 Or we toss the light bells of the mocker  
   With LOCKER.

Oh, the song where not one of the Graces  
   Tight-laces,—  
 Where we woo the sweet Muses not starchly,  
   But archly,—

Where the verse, like a piper a-Maying,  
   Comes playing,—  
 And the rhyme is as gay as a dancer  
   In answer,—

It will last till men weary of pleasure  
   In measure !  
 It will last till men weary of laughter . . .  
   And after !

AUSTIN DOBSON.

## The Miller's Piece.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning was Sunday; a day such as that the memory of which Herbert has made memorable—

so fair, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky.

Apparently the threatened snow-storm had blown over, and the sun shone through a blue and cloudless sky. Like everyone else in Ellandale, the miller's household went to church on Sunday morning. How small the place was, and how odd, may be further indicated by the fact that the old church held undivided sway on Sundays and holy-days. Once Mr. Jonas, who cobbled shoes, and read the 'Weekly Dispatch,' had seriously proposed to a few friends that they should 'raise their Ebenezer.' But the proposal did not receive wide welcome. Mr. Sprotts was the only man of any position in the village who lent a willing ear to the scheme, and as Mr. Sprotts was in the building line, and as the raising of Ebenezers is not unaccompanied by expenditure in stone-work, lime, and labourers' hire, Mr. Sprotts's unqualified adhesion was looked upon with some suspicion, not allayed by the emphatic manner with which he condemned the proposal when it became quite clear that it could not be carried out.

The church was very old, very wrinkled, and very small—so small, that it seemed to have followed the course of poor humanity and shrunk in proportion as it passed the limits of ordinary church life. The only new thing in it was a brazen eagle, on which the rector rested the big Bible with the streamers of ribbon that served as markers. This had been presented to the church by Miss Waters, the Squire's sister, who was now getting on in years, and showed a strong inclination towards greater fervour in church matters, and a fuller development in church millinery. If Squire Waters had been other than the obstinate, hard-headed man he was, or if the rector had not been just as obstinate as his old college friend, there might have been a rupture between Hall and Rectory on this matter. From time immemorial, the responses in Ellandale church had been made by the people in their natural voices and with their peculiar mastery of the English language. Among many other things that Miss Waters hankered after was what the Rev. Mr. Barham has described as 'nice little boys in nice white stoles,' who were to take upon themselves the contrition, supplica-

tion, and praise of Ellendale in church assembled, and were more or less musically to chant the 'Good Lord, deliver us,' and other responses of the Litany.

Against this and much else the rosy rector put up a back which nature had made sufficiently stiff, and finding no support outside The Trust, Miss Waters was fain to give in. But when she, one Christmas, sent over to the rectory with a pretty note the brazen eagle, the rector could not refuse the gift, and it was accordingly set up in the church, to the speechless amazement of the congregation and the consequent total loss of the moral effect of the sermon.

The rector blushed through his winter roses when he stepped forward to read for the first time from behind the spread eagle. This advance relieved the congregation from the necessity of further conjecture as to what might be the uses of 'the thing.' Farmer Rodgers had whispered to his wife that he thought it was a new sort of scarecrow, and opined that, whilst it would cost a sight more money, it would not be any improvement on the stuffed figure at that moment dominating his newly sown fields. Mrs. Rodgers thought it had something to do with the surplice; maybe to hang it on when the rector was changing. The cobbler, whose mind was soured by failure in the projected architectural elevation already mentioned, protested that this poor similitude of a bird was 'the thin end of the Mass.'

At these times Miss Waters found her only consolation in visits to The Trust. This was a row of eight small tenements, a little higher than the head of an average man, as men averaged in Ellendale; where dwelt, in accordance with the benevolent will of John Mercer, four indigent women over sixty years of age, and four indigent men who had shown an equal persistence in holding on to a life that furnished them with so few retaining-fees. John Mercer had slept under the tower of the old church for three hundred years. But there had never been lack of tenants for his houses. Each tenant, in addition to an exceedingly limited amount of house-room, had sixpence a week, whilst another charity provided two loaves of bread on condition that the trustees, as the old people were somewhat inaccurately called, attended church twice every Sunday.

Miss Waters, whose charities were not always on the scale indicated by the brazen eagle, trickled out tea to the old ladies through the revolving year. The tea was largely tempered with tracts, and sweetened by counsel chiefly on the duty of abandoning the pomps and vanities of the world, which the four poor old ladies had indeed pretty completely done. The apparition of the

brazen eagle was a period much blest to the old ladies. They got more tea in a week than had hitherto dribbled into their pot in a lunar month. Bantered by her brother, argued with by the rector, sneered at by the cobbler, Miss Waters found peace at The Trust. The four old ladies, their lean fingers nervously fondling the exceeding small package of tea, were unanimous in the declaration that the eagle was a great addition to the spiritual comfort of the church, and listened with approving nods to Miss Waters's enlargement upon its convenience and appropriateness.

The next day, when the rector paid his weekly visit, he found the old ladies so sound in their views in respect of 'the bird,' which he himself secretly detested, that with his own hand he brought them down a basket of cold meats, which gloriously furnished forth the supper table. The squire himself dropping in, and 'the bird,' as usual at this particular time, fluttering over the field of conversation, the four old ladies, chiefly by dint of dolorous shaking of their heads and solemn uplifting of skinny hands, strengthened him in his opposition to 'the bird,' and in his somewhat vague belief that its claws were pecking at the foundations of the Protestant religion. When he went home he told his wife that 'those old ladies up at The Trust would be none the worse for an extra flannel petticoat in the coming winter,' which they duly received, and though none spoke to the other, each saw in her mind's eye, embroidered on the hem of the garment, a picture of a brass eagle.

Nor was this all. The cobbler, calling round with a written protest against the presence of 'the bird,' the old ladies, whilst declining to sign it for various reasons (as that as yet no signature but the cobbler's own appeared on the fair page; as that it scarcely became them to appear prominently in public controversy; and as that they could not write), freely unburdened their souls to him. In talking to the squire they could not forget that he was Miss Waters's brother, and they felt that, whilst making sure of a petticoat, they were perilling their tea, as the squire might cite them against his sister. The rector, having accepted the bird, could not openly decry it, and the old ladies, not accustomed to diplomatic manner, were a little in doubt as to his true views. Hence the necessity for temporising. But with the cobbler all was fair sailing, and, to do them justice, they clapped on all canvas, assuring the cobbler that the bread they got on Sunday now had 'a sort of brassy flavour,' and nearly choked them.

The worthy cobbler had hitherto regarded the old ladies with some disfavour, suspecting their unvarying attendance at church as not being wholly free from lust of the flesh-pots of Egypt, as

represented by the two loaves of bread. He saw now that he had done them an injustice, and that they were really women of principle. He would have wagered his awl that if Ebenezer had been raised and nicely warmed for the winter months these old ladies would rather have had one loaf of bread a week there than two accepted under the shadows of the bird's wings. Wherefore he insisted upon taking their boots and cobbling them in a manner calculated to last them through what might remain of a pilgrimage only too fitfully illumined by the beams reflected from the burnished brass of the outstretched wings of the bird.

Frank and Mary walked on to church together, Josiah following after, keeping pace with the feeble steps of the miller. If Josiah had not known what sad anniversary had come about, he would not have failed to surmise that some uncommon influence was at work. The miller had taken to his shoulders an added stoop. The ever-present sadness on his face was deepened. But the effect was to make him more gentle in his manner. The ungoverned temper which in his younger days had sometimes possessed him like a fury was now entirely subdued. The process had been gradual, and his present manner had come to be accepted as a matter of course. But there were those in the village who well remembered the old Adam, and marvelled at the gentleness of the new man. Sorrow had been in his case a mighty purifier. Since Jack's death there had been times when, under great provocation, his face had flushed, his eyes had flamed, and his brawny fist had closed with the old motions. But he had instantly subdued himself, and by patience and perseverance had become what he now was.

Josiah's gentle nature was greatly drawn towards him, and brief as had been their acquaintance he sat and talked with him for hours, conveying to the miller much amazing information relative to traces of deserted towns and hamlets at low levels. The old man talked to Josiah with equal readiness. He conversed with him much more than with his older friend Frank, whose conversational powers were in truth of a varied and spasmodic nature.

As has been seen, Frank indulged in long monologues in Josiah's company, at times when more properly he should have been in bed. At others he would sit and smoke and look unutterable things straight into the fire. On this particular day he was at his gloomiest, and saw more in the fire than met the eye of Josiah or anyone else in the room. Only with Mary was he unvarying in his manner. He had probably set for himself the model of a brother in company with a favourite sister. But there were some lapses from the type not too slight for the simple

mind of Josiah to detect. Whether Mary saw or felt them, who could tell?—since she herself betrayed no indication. Frank was an old friend, always welcome in happier times. He had gone away at a period of trouble, some portion of which was accidentally brought home to him. For ten years nothing had been heard of him. Not a line had reached her directly or indirectly. She had come to regard him as dead, when without note of preparation he one day walked into the cottage, placed his hat on his accustomed peg, and the room was once more filled with the resonant sound of a familiar voice that had once been part of her daily life.

It was Frank's fancy to conduct himself as if he had just returned after one of his ordinary excursions of two or three days.

Mary was greatly fluttered, as any maiden might be in similar circumstances, but Frank's eccentric nonchalance communicated itself to her. If he took matters so coolly, why should she be in a flutter? Accordingly, after the first few moments' agitation, natural in face of this apparition from the supposed dead, Mary was slicing cold ham for Frank's luncheon with as perfect equanimity, and more than as much grace, as was displayed by Charlotte when Werther first saw her cutting bread-and-butter.

The miller was not able to take matters so quietly. Frank's coming was more than that of an old friend long lost to sight of eye or touch of hand. He brought with him the memory of terrible days that had seemed to be fast folded in the grave.

He was at the mill when Frank arrived at Ellendale, and when he came back and walked into the little parlour thinking of other things, no wonder he should start at seeing Frank seated at the table unconcernedly eating cold ham, and, except for his lengthened beard and his bronzed face, looking precisely as he had looked ten years ago on the Friday afternoon about the same hour when the miller had seen him in the same place similarly engaged. He dropped down into a chair as if beaten down by a stroke of paralysis, as, indeed, for the moment Frank thought he had been. His jaw fell, his lips moved with inarticulate sound, and he stared at Frank with a look of mingled terror and astonishment. He recovered sooner than Frank had expected, and sat up at the table to eat his dinner. But he did not go back to the mill in the afternoon.

'I am not so young as I was, Frank,' he said in the gentle tones to which Frank was as yet unaccustomed from his lips, 'and I have once or twice lately had sudden seizures which I don't want Mary to hear about. I thought it had come at last, when

my heart stood still to see you there, just for all the world as if the last ten years had been a dream. Perhaps it would have been better to write to say you were coming. But it is all right now—and I am glad to see you, however you come. You will bring your traps and stop here, now we have got an extra room besides the spare room.'

This was the only reference he made to what had happened since Frank had last eaten bread in the house. But he could see that his presence brought back to him the memory of the lad he had loved with the force of his strong nature, and Frank withdrew, anxious to relieve him from conversation that for the moment must be too painful to bear.

He did not appear in the parlour again that night, and on the next morning, when he came down to breakfast, it was evident that he had made up his mind to overmaster his grief, and to staunch the fresh wound made by the sudden appearance of one who had been so intimately connected with its cause. In this he had succeeded, and no reference near or remote was made to what had happened so long ago.

But the dead boy was daily with them at meat, though he filled no chair and claimed no part in the conversation. The influence of his presence was seen in the miller's ever-deepening grief, which seemed, as it increasingly possessed him, to absorb all the grosser parts of his nature, leaving him as simple as a child and as gentle as a woman. In Frank the chilling influence of the nameless guest was displayed in his fits of taciturnity and his increased consumption of tobacco.

Only Mary seemed unconscious of the proximity. She had loved her brother, and passionately mourned his untimely death. But there was perhaps another sorrow bound up with it which, unconsciously mingled, had taken the elasticity out of her steps, much of the laughter out of her eyes, and had made her a woman before her time. The coming back of Frank, whilst it necessarily recalled the death of her brother, touched the other grief, yet not altogether without hope. Frank was the same now as ten years ago, only a little better, Mary admitted. He was graver, and though sometimes she noted gravity deepened into gloom, it was never so in his aspect towards her. He always turned to her the same face, looking straight into her eyes that met his with equally frank regard. No one thus privileged could help reflecting in his face the pleasure he felt. Josiah observed that whenever Frank spoke to the miller's niece his face beamed with a sudden flush of delight. Mary answered the signal, though with becoming toning-down of its strong lights, and thus it came to pass that when these

two talked there was sunshine in a house that Josiah admitted to himself was on the whole a trifle gloomy.

## CHAPTER V.

MARY prattled all the way to church with Frank, and Frank talked to her with as light a heart as if he had never made that sketch on the bare wall of a room at Battleborough which at other times seemed burned into his memory. At church they of course sat together, though it did not seem absolutely necessary that they should share a hymn-book, seeing that there was at least another in the pew. But it so happened that Mary found the place first, and Frank, by a strange mischance overlooking the book that lay on the shelf just before him, helped Mary to hold hers whilst she sang. And she did sing, in a way that shocked Miss Waters, greatly comforted the rector, and in summer time, when the windows were wide open, made the lark outside pause in his upward flight, and wonder whether he had not made a mistake, and whether the member of his family who had strayed into the church had not on the whole found a better place to sing in.

Josiah was enraptured, and would have bartered the rector's excellent sermon for another hymn. They sang that one melodious hymn beginning, 'There is a land of pure delight,' which Dr. Watts miraculously interpolates amid a mass of audacious unrhythm.

Could we but make our doubts remove,  
Those gloomy doubts that rise,  
And see the Canaan that we love  
With unobscured eyes ;—

Mary sang this out with her fresh clear voice, and with all the energy of her soul. Of course she was thinking only of the hymn, and its natural application. But Josiah, instead of listening to the sermon, which the singing immediately prefaced, found himself detecting other yearnings in the cry than those which the good Dr. Watts had had in his mind.

'How wise these young people think themselves as compared with us!' Josiah reflected. 'A little common sense and courage would put all right. She loves him and he loves her. But he goes prowling round in the early morning and sitting up late at night, creating nightmares for himself and brooding over mysteries, till he will have his brain addled and his blood soured. She doesn't know what to make of it, but is proud and modest, and perhaps keeps Frank off when at times he might find himself enjoying a lucid interval. I will sit up with him one night more and talk to him plainly.'



With which resolution Josiah fixed his spectacles so as to get the range of the pulpit, and having put on an appearance of profound attention, which gradually drew the rector unconsciously to address himself to him personally as being the most attentive member of the congregation, he closed his eyes and recaptured twenty minutes' sleep filched from him over-night by Frank's unwholesome habits.

Josiah did not mean to deceive anyone. But he often found his spectacles of use, more especially at meetings of the R. S. A.

It was a slumberous morning, closed in by a peaceful evening. With the fall of darkness came the snow, long threatening. But it did not greatly matter to Ellendale. Afternoon service was over, and there remained only the long evening by the fire-side. So, whilst the snow fell softly and incessantly, removing neighbours' landmarks, and blotting out pathways over fields, Ellendale drew up its chair round the fire and enjoyed the absolute peace of the Sabbath evening.

Nowhere was it more peaceful than at the mill cottage. After tea Mary sat down at the piano and ravished Josiah's soul with more hymns. Frank, who had a voice by no means to be despised, joined in the harmony, a practice the more to be recommended since it necessitated his standing by Mary's chair, albeit there arose no occasion for turning over the leaves of music. Josiah sat by the table, which he gently drummed, keeping pretty good time to the music. The miller sat in his great chair by the fire, a structure of wickerwork something in the shape of a bisected beehive. It was uncommonly comfortable, and no chair ever framed a picture pleasanter of its kind. The old man seemed the embodiment of the peace that reigned in the room, for as he listened to the simple hymns he had sung himself in Ellendale church when a lad, the lines that marked the pain and sorrow always present with him were smoothed out of his face, leaving only the clear red and white of his complexion, set off by his white locks, and lit up by the light of his eyes and the smile of content that hovered on his lips.

When supper was over, Mary brought the great Bible in which the names of innumerable Hargraves were entered, and the old man read with clear voice the hundred and second psalm. 'My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. . . . My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; and Thy remembrance unto all generations.'

He was evidently back once more with his troubles, and they

seemed all the greater to him by reason of the surcease but just enjoyed.

‘Frank,’ said Josiah, as the two sat before the fire for what Frank modestly called his last pipe, ‘don’t you think you are a great fool?’

This was strong language from the lips of Josiah. But it was used with a purpose. He had made up his mind to put an end to the misunderstanding that he imagined existed between his old friend and the miller’s niece, and, as is the manner with mild men when facing a mighty resolve, he was inclined to err on the side of strong language.

Frank looked up, and regarded the speaker with lazy curiosity.

‘What for? Because I cannot go to bed early after the manner of a learned and automatic thing like you? or because, when I smoke a pipe, I like to have one that will hold more than a pinch of tobacco? There is a little monotony in your criticism of my habits, which generally alternates between these two points. Which is it to-night?’

‘Neither: I was thinking of Mary. I don’t, of course, know much of such matters; but if ordinary eyesight serves me, I should say that she is as much in love with you as you are with her, and I suppose you know how much *that* is.’

Josiah spoke in a tone of assumed confidence, though all the while he was horribly frightened, and nervously kept his eyes fixed on Frank’s face, not quite sure what a man like him would do in circumstances like these. Finding that he listened with a certain wistful look on his face, Josiah proceeded more briskly.

‘Now, if I were you, Frank, and knew my own mind, I should take an opportunity to-morrow of bringing this matter to a head. I suppose you are certain of the uncle’s consent. In such case, the next thing——’

‘Josiah,’ said Frank, quickly looking up, and speaking in a hard voice that contrasted with his former gentle tone, ‘oblige me by not again referring to this subject. What you talk of can never be. I have told you my secret, but in other quarters I have, I think, safely guarded it. That’s my only excuse to myself for coming here again. I came on another errand than love. It may be accomplished or it may not. In either case, I cannot hope for any conclusion that would make it possible for me to speak to Mary the words that linger on my lips whenever—as seldom happens, if I can help it—I am alone with her.’

Hereupon Josiah collapsed much after the miserable and woe-begone fashion of a hat that has been sat upon. He had nerved

himself with great effort for the task he had undertaken. He had started well, and had been much pleased with the easy flow of his own speech, and with its apparent effect upon Frank. Now he was cast down and in a generally limp and unhappy condition. All this was nothing to him, and what had he done that he should be drawn into the toils of this crime and mystery, and breaking-up of young hearts? He was something more than half in love with the miller's niece herself, and if the tangled skein could have been unravelled by placing at her feet such portions of the manuscript of 'Underground England' as were complete, he was at the moment just in that desperate frame of mind that would have led him to take the act. But that of course was nonsense. Mary would not accept him in lieu of Frank, and if she did, Frank would straightway grind him to powder. His only desire was to do good and make others happy, and whilst others refused the proffered happiness, he of all men was most miserable.

Out of his damp dejection there came a weary and absorbing longing to go to bed. If he could only sneak off and be at rest, all would be well. He looked furtively at Frank, and saw that he was in one of his semi-trances. His pipe had gone out and rested on the floor, the stem lightly held in the right hand hanging over the chair. Frank's chin was sunk upon his chest, and though his eyes were open, he did not seem to see anything in the fire at which he stared. Josiah convinced himself that it would be only a nuisance to wake Frank up, and so he would go to bed without the formality of saying good-night. It was quite time for everyone to be in bed. The great clock that stood in the hall, having successfully achieved the feat of wheezing which presaged the striking of the hour, had struck midnight. Josiah noiselessly rose from his chair, and stole with guilty step across the floor. If he had been going to murder Frank and rob him, he could not have looked, or for the matter of that have felt, more guilty. He would probably get a good wiggling in the morning, and he was not quite sure that Frank in his imperious way would not, when he found him gone, come up to his bedroom door, produce an informal writ of Habeas Corpus, and carry him off to keep him company whilst he finished the everlasting pipe. But if he once reached his room, he would lock the door and feign sleep, taking all the consequences of the row in the morning. He dare not light a candle, but there was one in his room, and he had matches.

He got safely out of the parlour, and stole along the lobby feeling for the head of the banisters, which were fixed midway between the parlour and the kitchen. In his search he received aid

from an unexpected quarter. The kitchen door was more than half open, and a shaft of light projected itself into the hall. Josiah's blood froze, and if his hair did not stand upright, he had a curious sensation about its roots that favoured the delusion.

When he mastered the situation, there was nothing particularly dreadful about it. The miller was in the kitchen—a circumstance which, seeing that he was master of the house, was not particularly remarkable. He was sitting on a chair pulling on a pair of big boots; also a matter-of-fact procedure not to be challenged by a guest. Nevertheless, it was odd that a man of regular habits, who, according to custom, went to bed at ten o'clock, and might not be expected to rise till six, should be discovered in the kitchen in the dead of the night, putting on a pair of boots by the light of a bull's-eye lantern.

The look of the old man's face did not tend to reassure the looker-on in the lobby. Josiah's latest recollection of him was as he saw him in the old beehive chair by the fire, listening with pleased and peaceful face to Mary singing hymns. Now Josiah saw, with a fresh icy current running through his spine, that the old man's face was purple with suppressed passion, over which sometimes flitted a look of horror. He was talking to himself—at least, his lips moved, though no articulate sound escaped him. He seemed to be expostulating with someone, violently shaking his head, and sometimes pausing in the operation of pulling on his boots to shake his fist. As he happened to do this in the direction of the lobby, Josiah at first thought that he was discovered. But the miller was evidently unconscious of his presence. When he had, with much stamping and thrusting, got on his boots, he put on a great overcoat, wound a muffler round his throat, pulled on a thick woollen cap, took up his blackthorn stick lying in a corner of the kitchen, and with the lantern in the other hand, made for the door leading out at the back in the direction of the mill.

## CHAPTER VI.

JOSIAH felt the snow-laden gust of wind that entered through the opened door, a sensation which had a wholesome effect in rousing him from the fainting-fit that was beginning to overcome him. The miller was evidently in a condition of momentary delirium, and had gone out into the darkness and snow. He must face Frank, and they must go in search of the old man before he tumbled into the mill-stream, or wandered away into the fields and was lost.

'Frank! Frank!'

Josiah was shaking up the burly figure seated at the fire, with

astonishing frenzy. But Frank had at last actually fallen asleep, and took a great deal of rousing.

'There is something the matter with the miller, Frank. I saw him go out just now at the back door, and I don't think he is in a condition to be trusted by himself.'

Frank was wide awake now.

'Is it snowing?' he said.

'Yes, I think so. I saw the door open for a moment, and by the light of the lantern I just caught a glimpse of falling flakes.'

'Get on your things as quick as you can and come along with me—quietly, though—and don't disturb the household or let Mary know anything of this.'

They were dressed and down in less than five minutes and, standing at the open door by which the miller had just passed out, looked out on the night. They could not see far, though there was all about the luminous glare that comes from untrodden snow.

'Don't you think we had better have a lantern?' said Josiah.

'A lantern would be no use in a night like this; besides I could find my way to the mill blindfolded.'

'Are you going to the mill, then?'

'Yes, we shall find the miller there.'

Frank strode straight on over the pathless snow and through the blinding storm. They had not got thirty paces from the house before, like everything else, it disappeared from view. The wind was blowing the snow direct in their teeth.

'This is lucky,' said Frank, bending his head down and tucking his arm in Josiah's, with intent to help along that weaker vessel. 'The wind has been blowing due north all this afternoon, and the mill lies due north to the rear of the cottage. So, if we keep our heads to the wind, we shall make port at last.'

They saw the mill presently, having kept on a bee-line for it. The key was in the door on the outside, and it remained for them only to lift the latch and walk in. Josiah would not have cared to do this himself. Still less was he inclined to stop in the snow-storm by himself. As for Frank, the surrounding circumstances of the chase did not appear to affect him in the slightest degree. He seemed to have jumped at Josiah's suggestion that the miller was likely in his apparently frenzied state to do himself an injury, and he was bent on coming up with him with the least possible delay.

The door opened on to a room in which sacks of corn were heaped. Through the centre of the floor chains passed, connected with a winch, for the purpose of raising and lowering sacks

of flour. The lower room was in darkness, but through the aperture in the floor above, through which access was gained by steps, they saw the faint glimmer of a light.

‘Don’t speak,’ Frank whispered; ‘follow me closely and quietly.’

There was a rail on the right-hand side going up the staircase. At a particular distance from the end of the rail there was a dark stain in the wood. It could not be seen in the half glimmer of light falling on the staircase from the middle floor. But Frank knew exactly where it was. He had seen it ten years ago, and it had been the first link in a chain whose slow length he had dragged in exile all these years. It was the mark of a blood-stained hand, and it had reddened the banister on the day that Jack was murdered. Whoever had done the deed, leaving the lower room by this staircase, had placed his hand on this part of the banister, and there left an indelible impression. No one seemed to have noticed it but Frank, and he for special reasons was careful to keep the discovery to himself. He had arrived at the conclusion that if the murderer was one habitually engaged in the mill, he would probably in going upstairs place his hand on exactly the same spot. These are little tricks we acquire in daily life, which are harder to put off or to vary than it is to accomplish much more imposing things.

Ten years ago, half a dozen times on the day following the murder, Frank had seen a man go up the staircase, and noted with a sickening sensation that no single time did he vary by a finger’s breadth in placing his hand precisely on this stain. It was not, taken by itself, evidence sufficient to hang a man. But Frank was quietly watching in other directions, and might have made important discoveries, but for the unfortunate circumstance of being himself arrested. Since he had returned to Ellandale he had stood at his old point of observation, and had seen precisely the same thing: the hand reached out as the staircase was approached, the rail grasped precisely in this point, and the body slightly pulled forward in the effort to mount the stairs. It was a habit probably of forty years’ growth, and all unconsciously a score of times in a day the murderer’s hand touched the faded brown stain, which only Frank knew to be the blood of the dead boy.

Frank knew where the stain was, and gave it a wide berth. Creeping gently up the staircase with Josiah exceedingly close at his heels, they heard the miller talking in a loud and angry voice. He seemed to have someone with him, though the other made no audible reply to his bitter reproaches and passionate denunciation.

When they reached the level of the floor, and could look in, they saw that the miller was alone. He had taken off the thick overcoat and pushed the woollen cap back over his forehead. He was standing by a plain deal desk, set against the wall, which in the day-time was used by the clerk who had taken the place once filled by Jack. In fact, the desk was in exactly the same place where it was on the Sunday morning when Jack sat at it for the last time.

The miller had placed the lantern on the desk with the dark side towards the staircase, leaving all that part of the room in deep shadow. He stood with his left elbow on the desk, his right hand nervously grasping the thick blackthorn Josiah had seen him take up out of the kitchen. The light of the lantern shone full on his face, which was distorted by passion. The account-book lay open on the desk, and the miller was apparently expostulating with someone in reference to its condition. But as far as the shivering Josiah could make out, there was no one in the room, and he watched with growing horror the eyes of the miller, blazing with passion, apparently fixed upon Someone whom he saw sitting on the stool.

'A good-for-nothing lazy lad!' the miller was shouting at the top of his voice when the two guests from the cottage came within hearing. 'This is a pretty return you make me for all I have done! I had no call to take you out of the squalor in which your fine-gentleman father left you. If it had been me who was in his shoes and him in mine, I warrant he would have left me and mine to starve. But I take you up, give you a good home, grudge you no pocket-money, don't ask you to do too much for it, and look here! Here are three accounts that I can call to mind at the moment which you don't enter in the book, and which, if I had not chanced to look over the list, would never have been asked for. I am not going to work this mill for nothing or for good-for-nothings. You will have a week to think of it. Next time a thing like this happens, you leave the place, go your own way, and if ever I catch you writing to Mary or trying to see her when you have once left the mill, I will bundle her out after you, and you may both go and starve in fine-gentleman fashion.'

As the miller said these words his voice rose almost to a scream. There was lying by the open book a mill punch, which whilst he spoke he had taken up in his left hand, and as he uttered this last threat he smote the iron punch with pointed end downwards into the open account book, piercing it at every blow.

'Ha!' he screamed, 'you'll strike your uncle! Take that,'

and with his left hand he struck at the air above the stool, where Josiah instinctively felt the head of the lad would be, supposing he were sitting there in the body. Leaping backwards as if he himself had been struck in the face, the miller made as if he were closing with an antagonist. With panting breath, but otherwise in grimmest silence, the old man fought with his ghostly adversary, stumbling and struggling about the room till he beat the invisible Something against the wall, and then stood back regarding it. Suddenly he made a dash at the chains which passed from floor to floor through the middle of the room, and beat on them fiercely with his stick, from which Josiah gathered with horrid distinctness that the lad, having been beaten down in the corner of the room, had, in a moment of desperation, attempted to rush across the room in the direction of the staircase, but had been caught at the chains, which he clung to till beaten off by his uncle.

‘I can stand this no longer,’ said Frank, and without further attempt at concealment he entered the room, with Josiah cleaving to him as a shadow. The miller had neither eyes nor ears for anything save the ghostly sights and sounds which possessed his fancy. Frank and Josiah had scarcely entered the room when he made as if he were dragging a body from the chains into the middle of the room towards the staircase. Here he flung his ghostly burden down, and stood for a moment peering down into the darkness.

Frank came forward, and, taking him by the collar of his coat, pulled him round, and looking sternly into his face said :

‘Miller, thou art the man!’

It was well that the grasp by which he held him was firm, otherwise the old man would have toppled over, and fallen where he had thrown his nephew on that same day ten years ago. But Frank held him as in a vice. His face when turned round to the light was still distorted by the passion that possessed him. His eyes were bloodshot, his forehead was set in a deep frown, and his dry lips slowly opened over his firmly set teeth. When his eyes met Frank’s and turned with quick inquiry to the figure which stood a little in the background, a remarkable transformation was effected. The strength passion had lent him faded from his face. His arms fell limp at his side, his knees bent under him, and he fell a nerveless heap at Frank’s feet.

‘Get up and come away from this,’ Frank said. But the miller made no sign either of speech or motion.

‘I expect he has fainted ; bring me the light.’

Josiah brought the lantern, which, turned on the face of the old man, left no doubt of what had happened. The stroke, long



pending, had fallen, and the miller lay dumb and helpless on the spot whence he had rolled over the still living body of his nephew.

‘We must get him home somehow,’ said Frank, no longer gruff in voice and stern in manner. ‘It will be a great shock to Mary, but it will, for the present at least, serve to explain everything, and we can think over what must follow.’

They carried the lifeless figure of the miller home through the blinding snow, and for the second time within the history of the little household a poor wreck of humanity, speechless and motionless, was carried up the narrow staircase and laid on a bed, from which it was only once more to be lifted out.

## CHAPTER VII.

ALL the village went to the funeral, for the miller was always popular, being esteemed and feared in the earlier days, when a naturally ungovernable temper occasionally got the better of him, and loved and respected in later years, when in the shadow of his great sorrow he had fought against human infirmity and gloriously overcome it. Mary would not leave the house whilst the dead body lay in it, or even after, when everyone said she ought to go for change. Her place was at the cottage, she simply said, and there she would stay, though broken down by grief at this sudden cutting-off of a friendship that had been to her that of a father to a favourite daughter.

The miller had left her the whole of his property, and it seemed to her that she would be best respecting his wishes by remaining where she was, and as far as possible allowing things to go on as before. Frank and Josiah spent their last night in the cottage on the eve of the funeral. Frank, who had taken on himself the whole of the arrangements, had testified to the unusual emotion under which he laboured by refraining from smoking. Josiah had not seen him with a pipe in his hand since the moment he had crept out of the parlour on his guilty errand bedwards. Now Frank reproduced the pipe, and fell into his old habit of sitting contemplative before the fire.

‘You will be off in the morning, old man,’ he said, after one of his eloquent pauses, ‘and I am afraid you will not regard your holiday down here as either lively or refreshing. There is one word I want to say to you, though. I dare say your good sense will have forestalled it. Let the secret go into the grave where these two will lie together. That was a point which I confess gave me

a good deal of trouble. It was of course natural that the miller should be buried in his own grave, though the notion that he was thus to find quiet companionship with his nephew was at first very revolting to me. But I see more clearly now the measure of his guilt. I doubt even whether, if all the circumstances had been placed before a jury as clearly as they were brought under our eyes, they would have called the crime murder, and would not gladly have availed themselves of the opportunity of bringing in a verdict of manslaughter. I think it is clear that Jack, who I have good reason to know shared his uncle's violent temper, struck him first, and the blows that followed were dealt in a fury of passion, free at least from the guilt of premeditated murder. Since then he has lived ten years, which I believe have been one long unceasing pang of remorse. Day and night he has fought against the domination of that temper which led him into crime. I expect that on Sunday he had been brooding over the anniversary, and his brain, temporarily at least, giving way, the failure had been accompanied by a paroxysm of passion in which he once more went through the fearful scene. Jack's death is almost forgotten. The miller's hand in it is unsuspected. No innocent person has suffered by his escape, and since no good, but only infinite pain, would come of the discovery, let us bury our knowledge of it in the grave where we shall lay the old man in the morning.'

'And what about Mary?'

'I am going away in the morning as soon as the funeral is over,' said Frank abruptly, and Josiah recognised in the tone a bar to further conversation.

Frank went away as he said, but there is reason to believe that at some subsequent time he must have returned. At any rate, it would not be reasonable to suppose, from all we know of her character, that the miller's niece would have followed him to London. What is certain is that Josiah is a constant visitor at a house of red-brick frontage and Elizabethan design, built not a mile and a half from Hampstead Heath. Here lives the miller's niece, now known as Mrs. Frank Fisher, the happy wife of the distinguished artist whose picture, 'Sunset at the Mill,' will be remembered as the great attraction at the Academy last year.

They must have been married some time too, for Josiah has twice had an opportunity of severally renouncing the devil and all his works on behalf of two small atoms of humanity set forth in lace frills. They are both boys, and the first was of course christened Frank. With respect to the second, Mary, thinking kindly of many years' kindness in far-off times, would have had the lad named Alfred.

'Dear uncle would have been so fond of him if he had been alive to know him,' she said, with softly glistening eyes.

But somehow or other Frank objected to this name, protesting that, for unaccountable reasons, he had never been able to bear it. He suggested Josiah, a proposal against which Mrs. Frank Fisher at first turned up her pretty nose. But she relented when Frank told her, even with unnecessary enlargement, how Josiah had pleaded her cause in times past. 'He was a perfect nuisance to me with his "What about Mary?" "What will Mary think of this?" and "Won't you go down on your knees and implore her to marry?"'

So they called the babe Josiah.

HENRY W. LUCY.

## Rambles round Harrow.

### V.

It will be necessary once more to retrace some of our steps and to suppose ourselves at Pinner Station, in order to recommence the delightful walk that lies between Bentley Priory and Stanmore Park. Strangely enough, one of the places is offered for sale, and the others to be let, since alluding to them on a former occasion; and indeed it was rather surprising to see so many houses, that offered every apparent attraction, with boards before them intimating that they were at the disposal of any passer-by they might suit. The very week that I had seen these empty houses I found in an illustrated paper, the organ of architects, a very interesting account of Bentley, which must almost have rivalled Holland House in the literary associations that hang around it. Rogers, Southey, and Wordsworth were among its guests, and they all knew the haunts of the park well; and here sometimes Lord Sidmouth, the sententious Addington, used to meet Canning, of whose terrible satires he was so often the victim. And later on Bentley was a favourite rendezvous of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. Scott revised 'Marmion' in a summer-house in the grounds, and Rogers wrote some of the 'Pleasures of Memory' here; inspired, it has been suggested, by the shady avenues and the tranquil scenery of the park. Bentley was purchased nearly a century ago by Lord Abercorn, and it is interesting as having been the residence of the Dowager Queen Adelaide. It was rented from Lord Abercorn for her for three years, but she only lived to enjoy half the lease. Many old people yet living in the neighbourhood speak of her kindnesses, and her genial love for everyone about her. Strathmore and Harrow Weald knew her well; and the last time that she appeared in public was when she laid the foundation stone of Stanmore new church, which stands at the corner of the boundary lane that ends the easterly direction of Stanmore and Bentley Parks. For nearly three years after Lord Abercorn had decided to live in Ireland, Bentley Priory remained without a tenant, until Sir John Kelk, the eminent contractor, purchased it, and now again it seems to be at the disposal of the public. There are six lodges on the roads by which Bentley is surrounded, and some of them are very neat and tasteful. In no part of England do laurels and rhododendrons and yews grow to greater perfection. Often the house is lost to sight until we approach near its entrance,

and by whichever road a visitor comes, he must perforce arrive at the mansion by the northern entrance. The principal rooms from the hall are the billiard-room, picture-gallery, and great drawing-room, and library. But on the same floor are two rooms—the morning-room and gentlemen's-room. These were usually occupied by the Queen Dowager as a sitting-room and bed-room, and in one of these she died. She chose these rooms on account of their having a warm southern aspect. They are undoubtedly very pleasant, and from the morning-room a door opens into a magnificent Italian garden and conservatory 126 feet in length. In a summer-house on the lake Scott and Rogers spent many delightful days, and here much of 'Marmion' was written. The stables of Bentley are models of perfection; there is accommodation for fifty horses. The fernery, the lime-tree avenue (which is only inferior to the magnificent one at 'the Quarries' in Shrewsbury), the orangery, the cedars of Lebanon, and the yews are among the finest of their kind in Middlesex. Bentley Priory seems never to have remained for long in one family. After the dissolution of monasteries it would appear that Henry VIII. granted the lands to Messrs. Needham and Sacheverel; but they did not remain in their hands for long; they sold them to one Elizabeth Colt, and in the reign of Queen Anne this estate passed to two owners of the name of Coghill; and, though that was only in the first part of the eighteenth century, it passed through three hands—Mr. Bennet, Mr. Waller, and Mr. Duberly—before it was purchased in 1788 by the Marquis of Abercorn. Sir John Kelk made few additions to the mansion, only adding the projecting Italian front to the south.

It is said that Lord Abercorn induced Scott while he was here to write the lines on Fox:

For talents mourn untimely lost  
When best employed, and wanted most.

Lockhart, in his 'Life of Scott,' says that these lines came from the pen of the very conservative peer, Lord Abercorn.

From Stanmore Church, which lies at the extremity of Bentley and Stanmore Parks, a walk of rather less than a mile will take us to the Edgware Road, a few paces beyond the ninth milestone from London; and if we turn to the right, we shall skirt the old boundary wall of Canons and arrive at Edgware. This is on the old Roman road of Watling Street, which traverses the kingdom, and appears in its proper name in a small street in London, and often after as it passes through country towns. But the journey from Pinner Station to Edgware Road is very beautiful and full of sylvan delights. One of the shady lanes is here shown; the trees meet over the path.

way just as we crest the hill ; and beyond, the woods of Canons Park are seen. It is a charming picture, and one that would have inspired Gainsborough or Constable. It seems to require no composition ; that is all done, and nothing more than a careful copy is needed to make the scene a picture. A short walk leads us to the London road ; and if we turn to the north, we can arrive at St. Albans through Elstree and Aldenham ; whilst if we turn to the south, we shall arrive at the quiet straggling village of Edgeware, with its quaint old houses and its ancient church. A station now connects it with the Midland and Great Northern Railways, and makes it easy of access ; but for all this it lies in a comparatively lonely district ; and even in Middlesex is a stretch of country from Titten-



*Lane near Stanmore.*

hanger to Chipping Barnet, some two miles in width, covering eight square miles, that is not intersected by a railway ; and we meet with broad-wheeled waggons, and yokels in smocks with strangely and elaborately embroidered fronts, that are more really primitive than anything we see in Cheshire or Staffordshire. On the road to Edgeware we skirt Canons Park, of which mention has already been made. Of course the name of Chandos Arms is readily derived from the family who built and resided at Canons. The gables and chimneys are picturesquely grouped ; and, though few calls are now made on its resources, it is said that at one time a good dinner and a bottle of excellent red wine were at the disposal of the traveller. Part of Edgeware is called Little Stanmore, and beyond this is Brockley Hill, which is not far from the borders of Herts. This was

formerly the property of Mr. Sharpe, secretary to the first Duke of Chandos. A handsome drawing-room, which still remains free from alteration, was fitted up by Mr. Sharpe for the reception of the Duke and some other officers of state who held occasional meetings at this place. Fastened to the panels are the following large pictures, several of which are said to have formed part of King Charles's splendid collection: a whole-length portrait of King James I.; a whole-length portrait of a lady who is supposed to be Mary, Queen of Scots, but which is unlike such portraits of that



*Chandos Arms, Edgeware.*

princess as are believed to have the best claims to authenticity; Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador in the reign of James I.; a picture representing two boys, in the style of Murillo, and said to be the work of that artist; and portraits of the family of Sharpe, comprising those of Mr. Sharpe, his lady, and thirteen sons and daughters.

This account is taken from an interesting and valuable writing called 'The Beauties of England and Wales,' though some deductions must be made from a history more than half a century old.

But to return to Edgeware, which, though of great antiquity,



is not mentioned in the survey of Domesday. The principal manor belonged to the Countess of Salisbury, who was the wife of Longespée, and she granted it to her son 'Nicholas and his espoused wife' upon the singular condition that the occupant should provide one sparrow-hawk each year. But singular conditions seem to have been the rule here. A hundred acres were held under the Manor of Edgeware in 1328 for a pair of gilt spurs, and fifty acres by an annual rent of a pound of cummin.



*Edgeware Church.*

Edgeware Church is not of any great interest ; it is situated on the north side of the village, at the foot of a steep lane. The tower is ancient ; but the present church was built in 1764, at the expense of the family of Lee, who were patrons of the church in consequence of their possessing the Manor of Edgewarebury. Among the curates occurs the name of Francis Coventry, who was presented to the living by his relation the Earl of Coventry. He would seem to have passed a creditable career at Magdalene College,



Cambridge, and he published a romance called 'Pompey the Little,' and a poem called 'Penshurst.' The church consists of chancel and nave, but it does not contain any monument of interest.

After passing Edgeware Church there is a rather secluded lane that leads northwards in the direction of the Midland Railway tunnel, which tunnel was cut at an enormous cost through Deacon's Hill and Woodcock Hill. This lane is well worth traversing on account of its very primitive character, but it leads to nowhere in particular. Edgewarebury is at the end, and when we have arrived there we may turn to the left and regain Edgeware by an equally lonely route. Near Edgeware is Whitchurch, previously alluded to as the chapel to Canons, and here the 'Harmonious Blacksmith' lies buried, and a monument in the churchyard marks the resting-place of this immortalised man. Inside the church is the organ that Handel built when he was chapel-master at Canons.

There are two ways by which we can approach Chipping Barnet and Monken Hadley: one is through Highwood and past Barnet Gate, when the road turns to the right over the top of a high ridge, and enters the county town by Minorca; and the other road is past Totteridge Park and by Totteridge Green, from whence a road to the left leads straight on to Chipping Barnet, which lies between Monken Hadley and East Barnet.

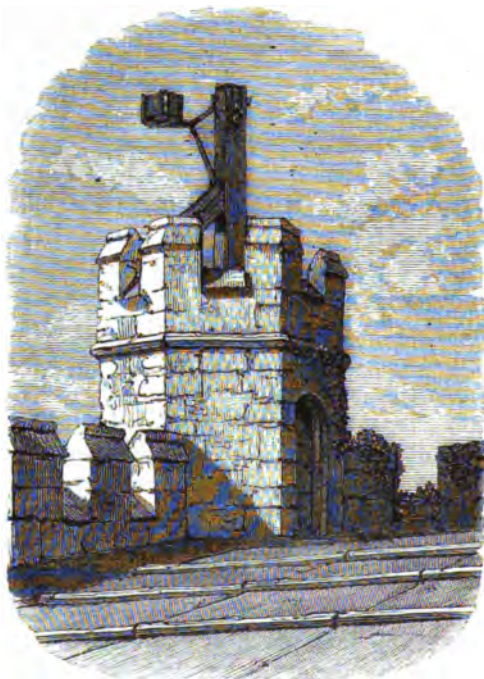
Hadley, Lysons says, is so called from its elevated situation, *Head leagh* signifying, in Saxon, a high place. Formerly this parish was a hamlet of Edmonton. The church is dedicated to St. Mary, and consists of a chancel, nave, two aisles, and two transepts. The aisles are separated from the nave by depressed arches and clustered columns. At the west end is a square tower of flint with stone coins; on the front is the date (1494). The four somewhat resemble the same which is quite common in inscriptions of that date.

Hadley has been called Monken Hadley from the hermitage that used to be here. It was attached to Walden Abbey, in Essex, and situated in the parish of Edmonton. This abbey is very fully described in Dugdale. Its situation is at the junction of the Cam and Bourne, and the recollection of it is still preserved in Saffron Walden. The name of the abbey remains, and of the Saffron, but both have gone. The most complete account, however, of this abbey is found in the great store-house of national records, the Harleian MS. in the British Museum, which was compiled in 1387, and is written on two hundred and sixty sheets of vellum, exclusive of compendious and exhaustive tables of contents, and it is to this that we must turn for information regarding the

hermitage. Norris Brewer, in his topographical work on Middlesex, says: 'The approach to Hadley is through an irregular avenue of trees, and the village is thus progressively displayed to considerable advantage. At the most favourable point in the approach, an ancient domestic structure in the foreground and the venerable church, half obscured by foliage, at the termination of the avenue, together with various intermingled rural buildings, combine to produce an instance of the picturesque, attractive from the repose which prevails, and replete with interesting character.' There would seem to be no mention of Hadley in the record termed Domesday; but it was granted at the dissolution to Lord Andley, who afterwards surrendered it to the King, and then it was granted by Queen Mary to Sir Thomas Pope. On the tower is also a device of a rose and wing, which Lysons, in his 'Environs of London,' says are probably 'the cognizance of either the abbey or one of the abbots of Walden.' Mr. Brewer thinks it may probably be the recognisance of one of the abbots; and, as it certainly is not that of the abbey, this is probably true; for it was customary, I have often noticed in different counties in England, for any buildings connected with a collegiate or monastic establishment to bear the name of the head of the establishment for the time being, just as in later years the names of churchwardens are duly recorded over any alterations or decorations of the Georgian period.

The church of Monken Hadley is a rectory. It is in the gift of Mr. Cass, who is also the rector, and he has collected some interesting memoranda regarding the venerable structure. Speaking of the singular iron cradle that projects from the tower turret, he says: 'The cresset that forms so distinguishing and well-known a feature of the church may probably stand in the position of successor to some more ancient landmark, which in a former age crowned the more elevated table-land on which the church stands. We know, at all events, that in the reign of Elizabeth, and subsequently, this locality bore the designation of Beacon's Hill. During the great gale of January 1, 1779, it was blown down, and on Monday the same month a vestry meeting was convened to consider about the repairs of the roof of the church, but there is no express mention of the beacon. The last occasion of its illumination was the night that followed the Prince of Wales's marriage, March 10, 1863.' This gale is spoken of in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for January 1779; and it is recorded that a dreadful hurricane swept over the greater part of the island, and that the damage was so great that the Magazine would not be able to contain an account of the damage done even though it were filled up with no other subject. Of course the same beacon would

be replaced, and any repairs easily made to the malleable iron of which it is constructed. Beaconsfield is another place where such warnings were placed ; and as it cannot be more than twenty-five miles from one station to another, about five in the interval would be all that was required from defenders who had so many means of communication. Beacons of course dated from very early times indeed ; but their services were also in great requisition during the



*Ancient Beacon, Monken Hadley.*

Wars of the Roses, and even at a later period when Parliamentarians or Royalists were required to meet some sudden emergency.

Among the records of Hadley are some curious ones respecting the church property and appliances, which appear in the Public Records 'Augmentation Office'—church goods—in the sixth year of King Edward VI., and on the third of August. This seems a little confusing at first, for Edward only reigned six years, as all our school-books tell us, and died in July ; but as Henry VIII. died in January, we should deduct a year. The items contain—

A gilt crosse weying . . . . .	xxx ownces
Item, one gilt challys weying . . . . .	xiii ownces
It'm iiij belles whereof the great bell in foote wydnes in the mouth, from the owtsyde of the skeartes . . . . .	iiij ft. iiij inches
Item, the next bell unto the sayd great bell broken, in wydnes as is aforesaid . . . . .	ii foote xi ins.
And in depth . . . . .	ij foote ij ins.
Item, one saunce bell, in wydnes . . . . .	i foote iiij ins.

'The saunce bell or sance bell is a corruption of sancte bell (sancte bell is pronounced as one syllable), called often the saints' bell. It was rung just before the elevation of the host, and also sometimes at the words Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus, Deus Sabaoth, whence probably its name. Sometimes it was a hand bell, but generally was hung in the sancte bell cote, of which very many remain in Norfolk, with a rope hanging through the chancel arch. Occasionally the sancte bell was in a turret on the tower, as at Trumpington, near Cambridge, where there is an arched recess in the basement of the tower, from which the bell was rung. Sometimes, again, the bell was hung outside the spire; the little bell still rung in some places before the sermon is no doubt a relic of the sancte bell.' Another item in this interesting list, of which only a part is given, is 'one lytle sackering bell.' This, according to Pugin, was a small bell in the shape of an inverted cup, commonly made of silver, to ring at mass, or before the sacrament when carried in procession, but the name must also have been given to the bell which rung to early matins. 'I'll startle you worse than the scaring bell,' Surrey angrily says to Wolsey, when he had the list of accusations in full to read to him, in one of the most dramatic episodes in the language. One slight addition to this digression may be excused, which is copied from a rare book in Chester Cathedral library. 'At the celebration of the mass, as the priest said the sanctus, the custom was to toll three strokes on a bell, which was hung in the bell cote between the chancel and the nave, that the rope might fall at a short distance from the spot where knelt the youth or person who served at mass. From the first part of its use the bell got the name of the "saints' sanctys" or "sanctus" bell, and many notices of it are to be found in old accounts.' 'It is very likely there were two bells—one for the sanctus, and one for the devotion; sometimes they were made of silver, and were called the sacring bell. On hearing the sacring bells first tinkle, those in the church who were not already on their knees knelt down and with upraised hands worshipped their Maker in the holy housel lifted on high before them.'

The grounds of Wrotham Park extend to Monken Hadley, and greatly beautify this pleasant country. The park is triangular in shape, and it is about three miles in circuit. The north side extends from Dancer's Hill to Ganwich Corner, and roads from each join at Hadley; about an hour's walk of great beauty will be sufficient to complete the circuit. Wrotham House was built by Admiral Byng, in 1754, from designs by Ware, whose style somewhat resembled Vanbrugh's and Adams's, though by many he is thought to be superior to either of these. Wrotham was the birthplace of the Admiral Byng who was sacrificed by the advisers of George II. in order to excuse or to hide their own shortcomings; but history has since done a gallant and excellent gentleman abundant justice. He was the fourth son of Admiral Byng, who was a contemporary of Marlborough and one of the ablest officers in the navy. He was raised to the peerage under the title of Viscount Torrington, and had eleven sons and four daughters. An evil star seems to have been over the family at the time. Admiral Byng's younger brother, when he went to see him under close arrest, was so shocked at the lampoons that were gathered all over the country, that he was seized with convulsions and died suddenly before he saw him; and the year before the execution of Admiral Byng his brother's son had met with a more terrible death at the Black Hole of Calcutta. The tale is simply thus: The Duke of Newcastle, one of the most incompetent and unprincipled of ministers, had succeeded his brother in the head office of State. Pitt was for a time excluded from the Cabinet, and then everything was chaos: even the cool, cynical Chesterfield cried in despair, 'We are no longer a nation.' It was during the absence of Pitt from the Cabinet that the French fitted out an expedition to capture Minorca, which was regarded before the days of steam as the key of the Mediterranean. In vain the Government were advised of the intentions of France; they stupidly adhered to the belief that the expedition was to invade England, and only awoke to the truth at the last moment. Then Byng was sent out in command of a fleet perhaps quite large enough, but only half equipped and hardly half manned; an indecisive action took place near the island; and the French account is that night put a stop to it, and in the morning the English fleet had disappeared, without waiting for official despatches. Byng was superseded, and sent home under close arrest, for cowardice. Newcastle at once determined to sacrifice him in order to turn away popular indignation from himself, the real author of the many misfortunes of England—a task for which his genius peculiarly fitted him. 'I never dealt better since I was a man—all would not do; a plague of all cowards, say I,' Walpole

bitterly said that if Newcastle neglected Minorca, he knew how to transfer the blame to other shoulders. The court-martial was a foregone conclusion, and a discredit to all connected with it. We are puzzled at this distance of time to account for such eccentricities and illogical conclusions as the members arrived at. A dark shadow is cast even over Anson's good name by it, and would indeed have been over Newcastle's; but he would have required, like Falstaff, to 'know where to try a commodity of good names,' before such a misfortune was possible. Admiral Byng's father, in addition to Wrotham, possessed a seat in Bedfordshire, and there the admiral was buried. In the church at Southill is an inscription:

To the perpetual disgrace  
of public justice

THE HON. JOHN BYNG,

Admiral of the Blue,

Fell a martyr to political persecution,

March 14, 1757, at a time

When bravery and loyalty were insufficient

Securities for the life and honour of a naval officer.

If, as some have thought, this is rather a bitter legend to appear in a place where the wicked ought to cease from troubling, we must remember that a sense of injustice is the strongest provocation that can influence human nature.

On the other side of Monken Hadley are two very noble residences. Beech Hill House is situated on one of those fine rises of land that lend such charms to this part of Middlesex, and the grounds are diversified with noble plantations. The road that leads from Southgate through Potter's Bar to Hatfield divides this from Trent Park, a very fine seat. It was built by the eminent physician Sir Richard Jebb, who obtained a large grant of land from the Crown, when Epping Forest was broken up. The park palings enclose nearly five hundred acres, and the enclosure was well stocked with deer soon after the mansion was built. The surface of Trent Park is bolder and more diversified than is usual in other parts of the county; and it contains some remains of Epping Forest, which was a remnant of the primæval woods that, until comparatively recent times, covered so much of Middlesex.

Near Monken Hadley is Chipping Barnet; indeed, it may be said to form almost a part of it. Here the terrible battle of Barnet was fought that proved fatal to the house of Lancaster, and in which the great Warwick lost his life. Warwick at one time almost owned counties, and it is said that he had no fewer than thirty thousand people on his various estates. Stow, the ancient

chronicler, describes him as coming to London with six hundred retainers, each wearing his livery and badge, the bear and ragged staff; but he was destined to fall at Barnet, and sadly reflected as he fell—

And who durst smile when Warwick bent his brow?  
 So now my glory, smeared in dust and blood,  
 My parks—my walks—my manors—all I had  
 Even now forsake me; and of all my lands  
 Is nothing left me but my body's length.

Dugdale said that the battle was fought near Friern Barnet; but, according to Mr. Norris Brewer, it took place some way off, and nearer St. Alban's Abbey. There is an illustrated MS. at Ghent, where many of the Lancastrians fled after the fray, which shows St. Alban's Abbey very clearly, as overlooking the field of slaughter; but this was probably the work of some monk in whose eyes the wealthiest abbey in England was the most important part of the scene. Then, also, it must be remembered that on a clear day at the end of April, the abbey would show quite clearly—it is hardly eight miles distant. In Gladsmore Heath, 'according to the tenor of modern conjecture, the battle was fought. This was until lately a large and dreary plain, well suited to the business of multifarious slaughter;' but, singularly enough, there are no features that can be recognised to confirm this belief. A column was erected at the Gladsmore, in 1740, by Sir James Stanbrook, and on this he says that the battle was fought there: 'Here was fought the battle between Edward IV. and the Earl of Warwick, April 14, 1471, in which the earl was defeated and slain.' It does not seem, however, that the spade and plough have uncovered the relics we always expect to find on the site of a great battle.

ALFRED RIMMER.

(*To be concluded.*)

## A Heart's Problem.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### A LAST WORD.

How miserably nonsensical all his fantasies appeared to him now in the light of the facts related to him by his father! The truth should have been plain to him from the first; anyone of the meanest capacity would at least have suspected it. She was more than justified in regarding him as an impostor, and—since she could do so—quite right to amuse herself by leading such a contemptible creature on, merely to see how far he would go.

Yet the positions and the characters of the two girls were in his eyes so very different, that even when Mabel Cuthbert seemed to be most like Lucy he had not realised the truth. And then the revelation followed so closely upon his first glimpses of what he had regarded as an impossibility, that he had no time to consider the matter.

Was he trying to find excuses for himself? He became impatient of his own stupidity. Who could believe that he, knowing Lucy as he had done, and loving her with a love which absence intensified and idealised, could have met her again under any conditions, however improbable for her to appear under, and not have recognised her? It was unutterably ridiculous to imagine that anyone could believe him, and not suggest his immediate removal to a lunatic asylum.

All he could do now was to accept the plain facts of the position in which he had placed himself, and to endeavour by his conduct to show that he could act in a practical, straightforward manner.

‘But what are you going to do?’ the father had asked before Maurice left him.

‘I shall write a few lines of apology to Miss Cuthbert,’ was the prompt reply, ‘and then I shall take the midday train to town. What things I require can be sent after me. As to my plans for the future, I cannot speak definitely yet: one thing, however, is clear to me, sir—that so far as any assistance from me is concerned, you must make up your mind to resign Calthorpe. I see no possibility of your being able to retain it unless—you can accept another favour from Colonel Cuthbert.’

The bitterness with which this was spoken showed the father



with what contempt such a course would inspire his son. He replied cautiously,—

‘No one can have a greater repugnance than I have to accepting favours which cannot be requited. But it is hard, Maurice, it is hard to think of giving up the old place, especially when in the course of nature I shall have so very few years to spend in it in any case. However, like yourself, I am not prepared to say precisely at this moment what my future course may be. But whatever happens, you and I must have no more misunderstandings. There, now, get some rest if you can, and I shall see you before you start.’

Maurice would have been glad if he had been able to follow his father's wise counsel and take rest; but after all the excitement of the night there was a painful wakefulness upon him; every thought and object appeared to him unusually clear; and to his own thinking all his actions were performed with unnatural calmness. He saw what he had to do, and he was going to do it at once, quietly and deliberately. He felt no pain at the thought that she was lost to him for ever; that was to come afterwards: but he smarted when he thought of her contempt, and how thoroughly he merited it.

He sat down and wrote, without meditation or hesitation; all that he had to do was so clear to him.

‘Friday morning.

‘I cannot hope that you will believe me, but I must trouble you with these few lines. You shall not again be reminded of my existence by any direct sign from me.

‘I simply wish to tell you that I have within the last few hours learned all that you supposed me to be acquainted with before. I now understand the scorn and the loathing which you feel for me. I, too, feel scorn and loathing for the creature you imagine me to be.

‘MAURICE E. CALTHORPE.’

He addressed the envelope, and after placing the letter in it, was about to close it. He paused, and the paper trembled a little in his hands. Her fingers would open this, and he seemed to be touching them for the last time. She would hold this paper in her hands; she would think angrily of his boldness in sending it to her, and she would never know the weary sickness she had left in his life. The words, too, would seem to her abrupt and callous. He had not even said good-bye, or given the slightest hint of what comfort it would be to him if he could only know by-and-by—a long time hence, no doubt—that she had learned to think of him with a little less disdain. But now she would—

He started, hastily closed the envelope and put a stamp on it

—for in his present humour there was a kind of relief even in the petty act of sending a letter by post instead of by messenger, so that she might understand how thoroughly he had accepted his dismissal.

‘More folly!’ he exclaimed bitterly as he flung the letter down. ‘I must get out of this sentimental brooding somehow; what does she care how I may be suffering? how can she know it? and why should she care if she did? My father is nearer the mark than I think he really believes—I am a hopeless idiot.’

Setting his teeth close, he began to pack his portmanteau with vigorous haste, thrusting things in anyhow and anywhere. He checked himself several times, and mentally seized himself by the shoulders, saying,—

‘Now look here, my man, this won’t do. You are to be perfectly quiet, perfectly cool, and you are to do everything in a measured, sensible fashion. That is the only way to recover your balance.’

Thereupon he tumbled everything out of the portmanteau again, and endeavoured to pack it with some attention to neatness; but the result was not satisfactory.

That letter haunted him: it contained all that he had to say—all that he ought to say; and yet there was so much more that his whole nature was craving to express to her—craving to make her feel and understand. But it was nonsense of the most unmitigated and unpardonable kind to think of it. Why should he bother her? why attempt to make her see his real position, when every effort to do so would only supply another proof of his apparent baseness; and his eagerness to satisfy her, convince her that it was her changed position which drew forth his declaration? She could not believe him: that was enough. Every additional word in self-defence at present could only degrade him the more in her thoughts. It was best to stifle the mad craving within him, or if it could not be stifled, to endure it.

The letter should go as it had been written.

‘It is my last word to her. I hope she will be sorry by-and-by when she comes to understand the mistake she has made. Probably she will never know it—it is so easy to forget those we scorn; it is only those we love who trouble us.’

He was eager to get away from the place, in the vague hope that the bustle and movement of the train, and strange faces, and the feverish hurry of London life would distract his thoughts. Everything about Calthorpe kept the fact steadily in his mind, that, however innocent in intention, circumstances distinctly gave him the character of a fortune-hunter.

Ugh! he shrugged his shoulders in disgust. There were still three hours to pass before his train-time, and to escape the house, as well as with some faint notion that so long as the letter was in his hand he was still in communication with her, he took it himself to the post office.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## SWEET REVENGE.

‘I BELIEVE that man has driven me mad. Is there no escape from this torture?’

‘I have insulted him. I have spoken such words to him as no man could endure, even from a woman. Is he a man or a demon? He stood there so still all the time without one word, without even a movement to show he wished to explain, that in my frenzy I said such things as I sickened to think of. They would have killed a man of any feeling: they made no more impression upon him than they would have done upon a stone. I have killed myself, I have not hurt *him*; he is insensible alike to pain and shame. Every word that I have spoken will echo throughout my life until the terrible repetition drives me quite mad, or death gives me rest.

‘But I cannot die now; I must live, father, for you. I must try to live and to be silent about what has happened; try to hide from you still the secret of all my strange ways and, to you, unaccountable fits of gloom and weakness.

‘I shall try, I shall try very hard to do it, for I know that my mother would have wished me to bring you consolation for the past, not new distress in the future. But I must speak somehow, and this is the only way. I can speak to you, tell you everything, and yet spare you the pain of knowing how miserable your child is until these leaves may be burnt, or until it becomes necessary to show them to you. . . .

‘That dumb white face with the sad eyes—cold and shameless I thought them, and yet they made me tremble, and make me tremble now—that face will not go away. Whether my eyes are opened or closed, it is still there—he is still there, and all the darkness behind and about him. I know that I have committed murder. Which of us is lying there cold and lifeless because hopeless? It must be myself, I feel so very cold; and yet there is a fire within me.

‘Is not this insanity? But surely the insane are not conscious of their own disease. Surely they are spared that affliction. If so, then I am not lucky enough to be insane, for I know all about

my malady; I know its cause, and also know that there is no cure for it now.

‘I discovered this way of relieving my mind when you first told me I looked “quite a different being.” Do you remember that day? It was when I returned to you in Dresden, released from Madame Vauvenard’s “refining-mill,” as you called it. There was all the joy of being with you again, and of learning that those months of hard work had come to a satisfactory end. I did work hard, and delighted in it. I was happier then than I ever had been before, more happy than I have been since, or can ever hope to be again—for everything I did was made pleasant by the thought that it brought me nearer to you, to be with you always, and to be to you all that I know my mother wished to be. For I know well what she meant to be; I *felt* it when you were telling me about her and about your last hours with her; I have since realised it in thought as well as feeling.

‘She never intended to stay away from you. As you said to me, she was driven mad by what she was told, and it was her love for you which prompted her to act as she did. I feel as if her spirit had entered into me, and that I may speak for her. Had she been spared only for a little while, she would have discovered how wrong the impulse was on which she acted; she would have gone to you, and you would have been very happy together. I feel as if it had been given to me to take up her life in relation to you, and the hope which gave me strength to do so much in such a short time was that of being able to fill her place to some extent, and to make you glad again. . . .

‘See how much calmer I have got! Look how wildly I began this writing, and how quietly I am going on now. It seems as if I had passed out of a stifling room into fresh air. Thinking of you, too, has taken me out of my morbid self and soothed me. I think it will be possible now to tell you in a kind of sensible way all that some day you must know.

‘On that day when I rejoined you I looked upon myself as a different being; and on that day when you for the first time brought Mr. Maurice Calthorpe into the library here I became conscious of the absolute distinction between my past and my present life. Lucy Smith was visible to me as a dear friend from whom I was separated, but to whom I could still speak. This fanciful idea was fostered by *his* recognising in me a strong resemblance to one he had formerly known, and failing to identify me. . . .

‘Are you startled? are you angry with me? It is the only

secret I have kept from you, and I did so partly because it was difficult to speak to you about it, partly because I was not sure of myself or of him. It is true I knew him as Maurice Esmond, and he knew me as Lucy Smith. Perhaps it would have been better had I told you this at once; perhaps it would have been better if he had been told at once that I had been known as Lucy Smith. But you had told me that you did not wish to have the past spoken of; and I had become suspicious of him. I had been told that everybody knew that he, assisted by his father, . . . I find it difficult even now to put down in writing what I was told about him. But it shall go down; it was this—that he was seeking by a rich marriage to save the estate of Calthorpe from being sold to pay their debts.

‘When I first heard this, I did not believe it; but when I saw him pretending, as it seemed, not to know me, or, if not pretending, showing that he had cared so little about me as to be ready to take me for another person because of a mere change of dress and surroundings, I felt hurt; then vexed; then angry and suspicious. The bitter thought darted through my mind that he was trying to make me regard our former friendship as of so little account that it might be quite forgotten in order that I might not think he had forsaken me when I was only a poor waif, although he was willing enough to pay court to me when he knew me as an heiress. No doubt this unpleasant suspicion was aroused by what I had heard. Whatever the cause, the suspicion once aroused, I soon discovered in his present and in my remembrance of his past conduct many things which appeared to give it probability, if not confirmation. I determined to try him, and so did everything I could to appear to him “quite a different being” from Lucy Smith.

‘I had looked forward to this first interview with him, and had expected that there would be on his part amazement and immediate recognition. In that case I had purposed telling him in your presence how it was that I had been known by another name, and asking him why he had come to us as Maurice Esmond. But all this was instantly changed by the mean course he seemed to have adopted.

‘I stop even now to question myself. Was not my course of conduct as mean as his? Should I not at once have explained to him the real position when he spoke of my resemblance to a former friend? You remember that he spoke of it as so remarkable, that if she had appeared in the same dress before me, I would have thought that I was looking in a mirror. . . . All the mad restlessness of mind and body is coming upon me again as I think

that one word spoken then might have made everything so different.

‘Was I wrong? No, I must not even think myself wrong, and yet the fear of it haunts me—tortures me. That would be a terrible revenge indeed for anything I may have made him suffer. But it is impossible; I cannot be wrong; what happened afterwards proves it. . . .

‘But I do not wish you to think too harshly of him. Very likely, if I could repeat to you exactly all that passed between us formerly, you would tell me that I had deceived myself in exaggerating the meaning of his words and looks, and had not been deceived at all by him. I would like to think that it was so. You will be impatient with me when you read this—it is so inconsistent. I know that it is inconsistent. I cannot help myself. If you could only understand the agony these doubts have made me suffer, you would say that I have been well punished for whatever wrong I have done. You will know something of it when you come to read the pages I have written to Lucy; for I found a fantastic delight in thinking of her as a friend whose cause I was espousing, and to whom I might tell my innermost thought. I could not—I cannot—speak to you, and so I found relief in the sorest moments of passion and grief in telling her all.

‘I was constantly perplexed by his manner; at times he *seemed* to be so perfectly honest in his belief that there was no further association between Lucy and myself than the resemblance. Here is the inconsistency again; at the moments when this appeared I felt indignant with him that he could profess such feelings for her and yet be my suitor. Was this jealousy of myself? That must be it, and perhaps it had more to do with my treatment of him than I myself understood or understand. At any rate, I felt satisfied of his cruel heartlessness, whether he knew me or not. My whole nature seemed to change, and I found a vicious delight in watching his advances to me; in measuring every step; in tempting him farther and farther until he should give me the final proof of his faithlessness, and say that he loved me—Mabel Cuthbert.

‘But oh the shame of the shameless part I was playing! Sometimes I was on the point of telling you how wickedly your child was acting, and imploring you to take me away. Sometimes I was inclined to make confession to him. Then came the remembrance of that time after he left Camberwell when I waited for the least token from him that he was still thinking of me—that he was coming back as he promised—the sick longing for the

post—the excitement when he knocked, the heart-sinking when he passed and there was nothing. Then I crept away to hide myself from the pitying eyes of my friends, who had given up trying to persuade me that it was useless to expect anything from him. A messenger was sent for his luggage, and when it went away there was no possibility of cheating myself any longer with the idea that he would return. He could think of his luggage: then he could not have forgotten me unless he wished to forget.

‘You came, and my misery was overcome by the bewilderment, the joy, the pain, and the new duties of my new position. I might have learned to think of that past experience as only a sad memory; but the letters from Calthorpe revived all my thoughts of him. You did not know how greedily I listened to every word about him, and now I know that it was only a part of the cunning device by which he hoped to make me forget his treachery and win the heiress, although he had forsaken the poor sempstress.

*‘I thought that I hated him!’*

‘At last came the hour which I had looked forward to as one of triumph and revenge. He spoke: I spurned him with such words of contempt! He would not speak. I left him standing there crushed to the earth under my scorn. He would not say he was sorry. He would not even give me one parting look of regret. My revenge was complete, and . . .

‘How I may act now I cannot tell. I wish I could do something to make him feel that I hate him.

‘I think I am dying. I love him with my whole heart. . . . I do not believe that he was false to Lucy or to me.’

## CHAPTER XV.

### A DIPLOMATIC SURRENDER.

THIS new diversion in the plans which had appeared to be so near completion was most inconvenient as well as aggravating to Mr. Calthorpe. What could have been more satisfactory than the arrangement as he had made it with Colonel Cuthbert?—what more irritating than this reversal of the whole order of things by these two silly young people? They did not know their own minds; or, if they did, the minds required repairing, for they clearly could not be in a healthy condition.

But, after all, it was only a diversion, and the crumbs of comfort he had been able to pick up in the course of his conversation with Maurice supplied Mr. Calthorpe with material enough to make a good-sized speculative loaf. So he rested well, and rose refreshed to bid Maurice good-bye. There was a benign resignation in his

manner, as if he were prepared to accept without murmuring whatever fate might be in store for him. He made no farther reference to the future than this:—

‘I shall hear from you in a couple of days, I suppose; and at any rate I shall be in London myself some time next week.’

But after Maurice had gone he settled himself down to take a calm survey of the situation. He was quite aware that his anxiety to bring about the satisfactory conclusion at which he aimed was now sustained more by his own interest in the matter than by his consideration for that of Maurice.

‘Selfish, certainly,’ he reflected, taking as he often did a complacent review of himself; ‘but a discriminating selfishness is the happy mean which best regulates our conduct. It is beneficial to ourselves, and much more helpful to others in a general way than any amount of sentimental self-sacrifice; the one always hits, the other often misses the target altogether.’

Therefore his conscience was quite satisfied that it was not mere self-seeking which prompted his action; and he entered upon his new plan with the undaunted courage of a hitherto successful general, who, having sustained a temporary defeat, is determined to retrieve his loss promptly. His stratagem was a bold one, and the first idea of it had occurred to him at the moment when Maurice was most bitterly assuring him that there was not the slightest possibility of a reconciliation with Mabel Cuthbert. It was so bold that the mere idea afforded him infinite delight, and rendered him absolutely oblivious to the fact that it was the last throw of the dice in his life’s game.

The outlines of the campaign were quickly mapped out; the details were to be determined by the march of events. His first movement was to send a very formal note to Colonel Cuthbert to the effect that he had most important business of a painful nature to discuss with him, and that he would be extremely obliged if the colonel would call next morning (Saturday) at ten o’clock. Should this hour be inconvenient, the colonel could appoint any other which would suit him; but the business could on no account be delayed.

This missive despatched, Mr. Calthorpe calmly proceeded to occupy himself with the ordinary affairs of the day.

At the end of two hours his messenger returned with the information that there was no answer.

‘No answer?’ exclaimed Mr. Calthorpe, looking at Harris the old coachman inquisitively; ‘you must have made a mistake. Who told you there was no answer?’

‘Perry told me, sir; and being a friend o’ mine, he told me



confidential that there was somethin' wrong upstairs, and the whole house was at sixes and sevens.'

'Indeed! Did he mention the cause of the disturbance?'

'Never a word about disturbance, sir, barrin' that the young missus was took sudden bad, and he was sent for the doctor; and when the doctor comes, master had a talk with him, and he went away without seein' her. The orders was to keep the house quiet, and quiet enough it was, for everybody was lookin' as scared as though there was a corpse in it. I felt mortal queer like afore I had been two minutes inside the door.'

'I am afraid the young lady must be seriously ill. That will do, Harris, thank you.'

Mr. Calthorpe was quite content to await the turn of events. This sudden indisposition of Miss Cuthbert was most significant. Since she as well as Maurice was so much affected by the parting scene of the previous night, it needed little conjuring to bring them together again—unless some very occult element turned the currents of their lives in the wrong directions.

There was an element at work for the influence of which he did not make sufficient allowance in his calculations. That was the shock to which their faith in each other had been subjected, and the stubborn fidelity of both to any course to which they had committed themselves. This element in their characters, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have made their union as nearly perfect as that of any man and woman can be, was now most likely to keep them apart. Mr. Calthorpe would have called this pig-headed obstinacy, and if he had thought of it seriously would have been unable to comprehend the possibility of its withstanding for any length of time even such reason as they possessed in their calmer moments.

He was curious, but not impatient, as the wet and dismal day dragged its slow length along without bringing any message from Hollyford. It was not the weather alone which kept him indoors. He was confident that there would be a message, and one of some importance. He was, therefore, not surprised when, in the dingy afternoon, Colonel Cuthbert himself appeared.

In the rigid politeness of Mr. Calthorpe there was not a glimmer of the customary geniality with which he greeted his old friend. But the Colonel was too deeply absorbed in his own thoughts to be conscious of any change.

'Where is Maurice?' were his first words. His voice was low, and there was a wearied look on his face.

'Gone to London,' answered Mr. Calthorpe gravely.

'When does he return?'

'He does not intend to come back to this place. He has taken his final leave of Calthorpe and——' A pause here; then, as if the words came with difficulty, 'and all its surroundings.'

The Colonel did not seem to take note of the latter part of the sentence; his eyes were fixed meditatively on the floor, and he remained silent.

'It was on that subject I particularly wished to speak with you to-morrow,' continued Mr. Calthorpe; 'as it not only dispels those hopes which you and I entertained for a little while, but disarranges all my plans for the future. Indeed, apart from the disagreeable business matters which I am forced to discuss with you now, or at as early an opportunity as possible, it may affect our friendship.'

'It is a curious mess we have got into,' said the Colonel, speaking as if he were thinking aloud, rather than replying to his friend. 'The very thing which would have delighted me most, and which seemed to be a probable enough event, was nearer to realisation than either of us imagined at the time we first talked of it; and at that very moment it is destroyed by a few angry words. . . . I beg your pardon, Calthorpe. This business has affected me in such a way that I am dreaming about what might have been, rather than attending to affairs as they stand, and doing what may be done to make the best of them. I came here to get your assistance in setting matters right. You used to be good at turning corners, and perhaps you can round this one. For myself, I cannot see daylight.'

'You have not yet explained to me to what business you specially refer,' said Mr. Calthorpe coldly. 'In the business to which I alluded, there will be no difficulty on your side in rounding the corner.'

'I forgot that I had not explained to you. I took it for granted that Maurice had told you something of what has occurred between him and Mabel. On my side, I don't know what other business you can allude to, and I do not wish to hear of any other at present.'

'Yes, Maurice has told me that he has been rejected, and rejected in such a manner as to put out of the question all thought of reconciliation.'

'What! do you think so too?' exclaimed the Colonel, disappointed and surprised. 'Then things are bad indeed. I can understand Maurice being hurt and offended; but I did think, Calthorpe, that you would not have taken up the words of a foolish girl, spoken in a passion, as anything more than a mere explosion of temper. But of course, if you are all decided that there is no

remedy for the harm done, nothing is left for me to do but to submit.'

'I see you are agitated, Cuthbert,' proceeded Mr. Calthorpe, assuming his suave, judicial manner, and speaking very deliberately, as if the matter at issue had no more interest for him than might be inspired by the desire to pronounce an impartial opinion. 'You must, however, admit that there has been something more than mere passion in the conduct of your daughter.'

'Has Maurice told you everything?'

'I believe he has; more, probably, than you have been told.'

'Has he told you that he knew her when she was living with the O'Bryans?'

'He did, but I understood that was to be kept from you.'

'I know everything now. This morning I found my poor child insensible beside her writing-table. When she recovered, I insisted upon having a full explanation, and she gave it to me; she had spent the greater part of the night in writing it out. . . . It was hard reading for me, for it showed me that there is danger to her reason, if we do not find some speedy means of relieving her distress of mind. I proposed to send for Maurice at once; but that was the worst thing I could have done, and it completely upset her again. What bewilders me is that she evidently cares a great deal for him, and yet is resolved never to see him again.'

'And he is fond of her, and is also resolved never to see her again. You know that it is my way when there is anything unpleasant to do, to be perfectly frank about it. Now, plainly, Cuthbert, I do not see how this matter can be mended at present. Since you have heard all, you are aware of the charge made against Maurice and myself.'

'Tush—it is nonsense to put any weight upon that,' interrupted the Colonel.

'It is not easy to avoid putting some weight upon it. Maurice is deeply hurt, and I must own that my own feelings are somewhat touched.'

'But we are old friends, and know each other.'

'Precisely; and it is because we are old friends that I feel it. At any rate, I think it would be unwise to continue to press this union upon them as we intended. The idea would constantly occur to him that she had thought he sought her for her fortune, and that would open the way to endless misunderstandings on both sides. As regards myself, you know that, being old friends, as you say, it was natural that I should desire to see my son and your daughter united. Of course, the fact that she had a fortune and he had none was present to me, but you were as well aware of

the fact as myself, and you also had thought of the possibility of such a match. We are both disappointed, and it would be best for us to say as little as we can about it. We must, however, immediately consider the arrangement of other matters—that is, about the mortgages.'

'I wish you would not trouble about them just now. There is plenty of time before us.'

'We need not have much talk over the disagreeable business; our lawyers will do all that for us. But what has happened renders it imperatively necessary that you should understand that no renewal of the bonds will be sought.'

The Colonel scanned his face searchingly, and became conscious that there was something to settle on their own account. Brusquely then,—

'Am I to congratulate you upon having become possessed of the means to clear them off?'

'Unfortunately, no, you cannot congratulate me upon such good fortune; the mortgages, however, are to be disposed of by this simple process—at the proper time your agent will foreclose, and Calthorpe will thenceforth become your property.'

Mr. Calthorpe said this with all the calm dignity of a man who is making a noble self-sacrifice, rather than with the air of one who is making the unpleasant admission that he is unable to pay his debts. He really felt at the moment as if he were by this master-stroke not only wiping out all obligation, but transferring it to the shoulders of his creditor.

'You know that I shall do nothing of the kind.'

'Your agent will do it for you.'

'He cannot if I forbid him.'

'Then I must beg of you not to do so, for Maurice's sake as well as mine. Nothing else can satisfy your daughter that she has made a mistake.'

'Look here, Calthorpe; such a step is unnecessary, and at any rate cannot be decided upon without due consideration. I took up the mortgages to prevent what you are asking me to do. The thing cannot be done.'

Mr. Calthorpe smiled sadly, as he might have done at some rash resolution of an impetuous youth.

'I see you are the old careless Frank still. Believe me, Cuthbert, I am grateful for this new proof of friendship. But I cannot take advantage of it, for as we stand now we must act more strictly on business principles than we need have done had our wishes been realised. I shall not leave you any choice in the matter, so far as I am concerned. At the proper time I shall go

through all the necessary formalities of surrendering the estate, and then you can act as you please with it. My spendthrift habits have done Maurice some injury, but they shall not cast a slur upon his honour. On that score, at least, he shall feel that his father was as sensitive as himself.'

A cynic standing by might have been indifferent to the old gentleman's display of magnanimity and beautiful self-abnegation; the simple-minded Colonel was disturbed by it. As the case was presented to him now it revealed the utter ruin of his old friend, and the destruction of the happiness of a spirited young man for whom he had much favour, all brought about apparently by the mistake made by his daughter. The fact that she was paying in herself a bitter penalty for the error only rendered the position the more vexatious when he found Mr. Calthorpe apparently so unreasonable and unreconcilable.

'I came to you expecting to get some help out of an unhappy difficulty, and instead of that you make matters worse than ever by this quixotic resolution.'

Mr. Calthorpe made that graceful deprecating movement with his hands which was always so effective, and indicative that he was well pleased with the successful progress of his diplomacy.

'Call it quixotic or anything else you like, but you cannot satisfy me that any other honourable course is open to me. Say that it is the mere gratification of overstrained vanity: I am content. I know that Maurice will thank me for it, and that he would hold me in contempt were I to act otherwise. It is the only way in which I can retain his respect.'

'I never knew you to act so like a fool before. You know what you are throwing up: you know that I do not believe this absurd charge, which the poor girl made when she was mad with pain herself. I tell you that she does not believe it; then why should you do this, and spoil the friendship of so many years?'

'My dear Cuthbert,' exclaimed Mr. Calthorpe warmly, taking both his hands, 'nothing can and nothing shall spoil our friendship; that must continue to be the same as ever; and I look on our disagreement on this important subject as the strongest proof of our regard for each other. We have only to agree to disagree, as the saying is, and our mutual esteem remains undiminished. But even you cannot foretell what insidious effect might be produced on your mind were I for purely selfish reasons to leave my son's motives open to the possibility of misinterpretation.'

'It is useless to speak further on the subject, I see. You make me feel as if I had been pleading for my daughter. That was not my intention, although, in my anxiety to discover what was best to

do for all parties, I have said much more than she would be pleased to know had been said. At the same time, my opinion is that you are all laying up for yourselves a store of remorse. I say no more.'

It was not Mr. Calthorpe's intention that he should 'say no more;' and he was aware that he had reached the point where there was the risk of being hoisted with his own petard. So by a didactic movement he glided skilfully into a new key.

'The sentiment called love is only the highest form of egotism; and you know how we bristle with angry passions when that is hurt. Our egotism has been sorely hurt, and that is the reason why we three are acting so stubbornly. Very likely we shall go into sackcloth and ashes for our folly by-and-by. Meanwhile, let me try to speak as your old friend—your oldest now, I think—and, standing quite apart from my personal interest in this unhappy affair, give you what help is in my power.'

'Now you are more like yourself.'

'My counsel is brief—do nothing. That is a course which is not so easily followed as it seems; but when you can do so, it is generally successful and always safe.'

'I believe there is nothing else for me to do now unless I could induce Maurice to come to Hollyford and speak to her himself.'

'You have already proposed that to her, and you know the effect it had.'

'Yes, but that was in the first hours of her distress. She will change.'

'Then wait until she does so. Let them both have their own way; whatever the result, it will be better than any we could bring about by thrusting our wishes upon them.'

Colonel Cuthbert was not much relieved by this interview, but his friend was.

'After all, it may not be necessary to leave the place, even temporarily,' observed Mr. Calthorpe complacently as he looked out at the window.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DIVIDED LIVES.

THE reply given to all inquirers after the health of Miss Cuthbert during the next fortnight was—'rapidly recovering;' at the end of three weeks she was able to see intimate acquaintances, and, except that she was pale and evidently somewhat weak, no one would have imagined that her illness had been more than what she called a trifling indisposition. The accident of the birthday dinner party having taken place immediately before she had been obliged to deny

herself to visitors caused the report of her illness to spread rapidly, and gossips added their own speculations to the simple statement that she was suffering from the effects of a sudden chill. The absence of Maurice Calthorpe from the dinner party had been observed at the time, and his name was in mysterious ways mixed up with an event which would scarcely have attracted any attention if the lady had not been an heiress and a beauty.

Amongst the regular inquirers was Sir Frederick Powell.

At the end of a month Miss Cuthbert received callers. Those who saw her for the first time were considerably surprised to find her talking quite calmly, and without the slightest symptom of there having been anything particular the matter. She was apparently unmoved even when some good-natured ladies mentioned the Calthorpes, on the pretext of acquainting her with the strange news that the long-anticipated ruin had come at last. She displayed nothing but the polite interest which might be taken by anyone in a neighbour's misfortune.

'She never had a thought of young Calthorpe,' was the general verdict, and Sir Frederick Powell was convinced that it was the right one. He was aware that his own assiduous attentions at this time were observed by the local Argus, and he was proud that his name should be associated in any way with that of Mabel Cuthbert.

A week later she returned a number of visits. Out-of-doors and indoors she appeared to have taken up the ordinary routine of her life, as if there had been no interruption to its even tenor. The only alteration in the establishment at Hollyford was the appearance of a stoutish, ruddy-faced woman called Mrs. O'Bryan, who was in public known simply as Mabel's personal attendant, but who was in private Mother O'Bryan, the kind nurse and faithful friend. Mrs. Harper was still the chaperon and the general superintendent of the house affairs; but without anything being said, or any unpleasantness, Mabel dispensed with her companionship in private as much as possible. The good lady, being quite unconscious of having done anything to cause offence, took none; and enjoyed the extra liberty afforded her by the presence of Dame O'Bryan.

The house reasserted its claim to recognition as one of the most hospitable in the country; numerous invitations were received by the Colonel and his daughter, and few were declined. At first Mabel was perhaps not quite so lively in society as she used to be; but this, being attributed to the weakness resulting from illness, rendered her an object of the more interest and care. As strength returned, however, she became again one of the

pleasantest companions a man could take in to dinner. She would listen with flattering attention to the intellectual, and to the stupid man she would chatter of the things with which he was best acquainted—thus affording him opportunities of finding occasionally something to say. Of the two classes of men she seemed to prefer the stupid ones.

Presently it was known that a house had been taken in town, and was being furnished in such a style as suggested that the Colonel and Miss Cuthbert thought of spending there a considerable part of the year. There was nothing in this to attract particular attention, and nothing in the conduct of either father or daughter to indicate that an important crisis was being quietly passed over. In town and country they were looked upon as remarkably happy people, and their devotion to each other was shown by their constant companionship. The current of their lives seemed to flow on as smoothly as if it had known no whirlpools.

Colonel Cuthbert and his daughter had entered into a simple compact, namely, that there should be no reference between them to Maurice or the unhappy events associated with him.

‘So be it, Mabel,’ said the father tenderly; ‘if my silence can give you any ease of mind, you shall have it.’

She kissed him, and that was all.

The struggle had been a hard one, but it was over now. That letter from Maurice had settled everything for her. Mabel Cuthbert had extinguished the love which she now knew she had been craving for, and she could not hope to rekindle it. Sometimes Mabel thought that the fire must have been a feeble one to have been so easily put out. Sometimes she thought of letting him know directly that she was sorry for having uttered those undeserved reproaches—undeserved, although at the time they were spoken the charges were cruelly true to herself. But she put both thoughts away: the one was unworthy of her if she had any faith in him; and the other was useless, as he did not care for her now.

Mabel Cuthbert’s course in life was perfectly plain to her: all that was good in her was to be devoted to the service of her father, and in the effort to make his days bright she would no doubt find comfort for herself. Her first task was to convince him that she was content with the turn events had taken, by acting like a sensible woman and attending to the practical business of life. She was not going to mope, or play the lovelorn damsel; and it was wonderful how calmly she bore her burden. She seemed to have quite realised that all was definitely at an end between her



and Maurice, and to have become reconciled to her fate. The inevitable is always bearable; the possible is always troublesome.

That was Mabel Cuthbert.

But the spirit of Lucy would rise at unexpected times, and in solitary moments take brief possession of her. Then she would dream the old dreams over again. Somehow, she always saw him then as he had appeared to her in the little room at Camberwell, his pale, anxious face bending over books or manuscripts, and with the bright smile with which he greeted her entrance.

There he was now in his desolate chamber, grinding through work which had no pleasure for him because there was no beacon ahead; thinking of her sadly, and perhaps bitterly at times. He must be very miserable. Then she would hunger to be by his side; to bring back the bright smile; to cheer him on to success; to share his triumphs and urge him to new endeavour. There was a sense of pain in thinking of his possible success, and she not with him; there seemed to be more satisfaction in the vision of the sad face. Then the spirit went away, and Mabel Cuthbert took her place again.

The vision was in many respects correct enough as regarded Maurice, but he was not conscious of being desolate: he was simply indifferent to all creation. He sought no sympathy, feeling that he could have none. To Arkwood, who had been his confidant hitherto, he only said—

‘It’s a rum story, but I am not going to tell you any more than this—I am not to see Miss Cuthbert again, although I am not going to flee to the uttermost ends of the earth. That’s rubbish. I expect Calthorpe will soon be in the hands of my father’s creditors, and so I need not go there again. My father will be in town soon, and he may tell you as much as he pleases about the affair if you care to hear. That’s all I have to say.’

‘I told you it was another bad attack,’ was Arkwood’s cool reply, ‘but you will get over it in time.’

‘I have got over it. A man may cry for the moon, and yet, recognising the fact that it is unattainable, jog on somehow through the world without it.’

So far as he could make out, that was his case now; he had been crying for the moon, and had at last realised that he could not have it. With the realisation of this fact there was a total collapse of all interest in life. It was unnecessary for Arkwood to recommend the panacea of hard work this time; Maurice took to work mechanically; but there is no panacea for absolute indifference. He had hoped to make some lucky hit, either at the bar or with his pen, which would help him on the way to

fortune. But now he had no thought of accomplishing more than a dull round of commonplace, plodding work. There were no glimpses of possible short cuts to success, and he did not seek any. There was only a long dreary flat road before him, with no flowers by the wayside to perfume the air and refresh the mind.

By-and-by he found a kind of morbid pleasure in the sense of his loneliness, and in time came a higher pleasure in dreaming about Lucy, and what might have been had she been with him. He did not try to turn from this dream; he cherished it in secret all the more tenderly in being conscious of his own folly.

Seeing his son settled in what was to him an incomprehensibly obstinate humour, Mr. Calthorpe became uncomfortable, and cast about for some means to quicken him. He was frequently in town now, and frequently met Colonel Cuthbert at their respective clubs, and sometimes saw Mabel at the houses of mutual friends. With her he was polite, but carefully avoided any prolonged conversation. With the Colonel he maintained his confidential relationships, and without any appearance of curiosity contrived to keep himself well acquainted with all Mabel's movements so far as her father understood them. Although the time was drawing unpleasantly close when he would be obliged to surrender Calthorpe or his own dignity and his son's, he did not lose hope, even when told that Mabel was perfectly happy, and so busy that she could scarcely find time for her numerous engagements.

'I am suspicious of people who are always "so busy,"' observed Mr. Calthorpe; 'they are rarely comfortable themselves, and they never make other people so. She is not cured yet.'

He, however, began a systematic effort to arouse Maurice's interest by repeating some of the things he heard. He elicited no more than a smile, which showed that his drift was understood, and the dry response,—

'With wealth, beauty, and troops of friends, no woman is capable of being unhappy about anything for more than a day. And there is no reason why she should be.'

The words were spoken, not bitterly, but callously, as if they referred to a person about whom he knew nothing; and Mr. Calthorpe smiled too.

'You are developing into an excellent specimen of a man of extremes; first all sentiment, now all cynicism. You remember the saying as to the fate of extremes.'

The wily diplomatist was careful not to press Maurice too much at once; and although he obtained for him a number of invitations, he did not urge him to accept any. At length he persuaded him to go to an 'at home' at the house of an old friend. There,

as the father had expected, Maurice saw Mabel. She was standing by the side of the hostess as he entered the room. A scarcely perceptible pause—then he moved forward, and without the slightest apparent embarrassment went through the usual formalities before mixing with the other guests. As he passed away, Mabel quietly resumed the conversation with the hostess.

Mr. Calthorpe had been observing the two, and their calmness under this ordeal, which he had contrived to bring about with so much difficulty, displeased him. They had met, they had stood within a pace of each other, and neither had made the slightest sign of recognition.

'But she did start a little when he entered,' he said, seeking to console himself—'very little, though. And Maurice did look for a second as if he meant to turn tail. But he didn't. It is not satisfactory.'

Maurice persuaded himself that the meeting had not affected him much; he had often looked forward to such an event, and had carefully studied the demeanour he should observe whenever it might occur. Those bitter words—'if you speak to me, I shall openly insult you'—would flash to his mind and keep him calm. Speak! Why should he speak to a woman who could say that to him? Outwardly he had acted very much as he had intended, and he kept a tight hold on the disturbing emotions which had been reawakened within.

'I have some news for you,' said Mr. Calthorpe a few days afterwards. 'Cuthbert has just told me that his daughter is likely to become Lady Powell.'

'He is a very good fellow, I believe,' was the cool reply.

'The thing is not quite settled yet,' said the father, making another effort to discover the real state of his son's feelings.

'What matter?—they won't expect wedding gifts from us.'

Maurice went on with his work. He was glad to have this news, as it determined matters in such a way as to put an end to everybody's doubts.

Mr. Calthorpe really did begin to lose hope. He was a little sorry that he spoke so soon; for Maurice accepted the affair as definitely settled, and did not show the slightest inclination, as he had hoped he would, to make another effort to save Calthorpe by a reconciliation with Miss Cuthbert.

'I am afraid it will be necessary to leave the old place,' was his uneasy reflection. 'Still, as I said, the thing is not settled.'

And the spring returned to the old gentleman's steps as he comforted himself with the recollection of that, to him, important

fact. He was not easily daunted: what fits of depression had afflicted him never lasted long. His philosophic imagination could endow the light of a common candle with the brilliancy of an electric lamp—for himself.

Another surprise was in store for Maurice.

‘Mrs. O’Bryan!’ he exclaimed, when he opened his door and was suddenly confronted by his former landlady.

‘Yes, Mr. Esmond—Calthorpe it is, I mean. It’s myself, and I hope I see you well, sir. It’s the sore trouble I am in, and dunno what to do.’

‘Come in; I scarcely knew you, it is such a long time since I saw you,’ he said warmly, drawn to her by associations with that old time—how very old it seemed to be now!—in which he had been happier than he knew, and in dreaming of which the happiest part of his present was found.

‘It’s sorry I am to bother you, sir, but Teddy, poor boy, tould me to get him a decent lawyer, and it came to me, knowin’ that you were in the law, that you might be able to tell me where to find one if one is to be found for the likes of us.’

‘Teddy sent you?’ said Maurice, relieved and yet somehow dissatisfied.

After the first pleasurable surprise at sight of his old friend, there occurred a suspicion that she might be the bearer of a message from Lucy, for he knew that she was serving the proud beauty who had once been his simple sweetheart. It was a relief to know that his strength was not to be still further tested by a communication of any kind directly from her. And yet it might have afforded him some comfort to know that he had not been so utterly deceived in the character of Lucy as the conduct of Miss Cuthbert forced him to believe. It might have been a consolation hereafter to know that in such a crisis in her life as the one now fast approaching, she had still the grace to give a kindly thought to the man she had confessed, even in her frenzy of indignation, that she had once loved.

No, it was better as it was; a kind word now would have filled his after life with vain regrets. He dismissed all thought of her, and concentrated his mind on Mrs. O’Bryan’s affairs.

‘Yes, sir, Teddy it was that sent me,’ went on the poor woman, with suppressed sobs in her voice, and the face which used to be aglow with good humour expressing much perturbation.

‘Sit down and tell me what has happened that you require the aid of a lawyer. I see you are in mourning; does that mean you are a widow?’

'It does, sir. Dan went to glory—rest his soul!—more than a year ago, an' ever since I've been with our darlin' at——'

'I understand. Tell me about your son.'

Mrs. O'Bryan was taken aback by the interruption, and the sudden coldness of his manner.

'Haven't you heard, sir, about the constable that was murdered the night before last?'

'You mean what is called the Fenian outrage, when the police were arresting two men in Clerkenwell?'

'That's it, an'—oh the black shame on them!—they've taken my poor boy and say he done it.'

Here she gave one big sob, and drew her hand across her mouth as if to stifle other sounds of grief.

'This is a serious business, Mrs. O'Bryan,' said Maurice gravely; 'and I hope your son will be able to clear himself of the charge. I hope he had no hand in the matter.'

'No hand in the world, I'll go bail. The boy is as innocent as myself.'

'I trust it may be so.'

'Sure you don't misbelieve him, Mr. Esmond!' she cried anxiously.

'I would not like to say that, but I am not surprised at his being implicated in the affair; for you know, Mrs. O'Bryan, Teddy was proud of his patriotism, and took no care to guard the expression of his opinions regarding the Government of Ireland.'

'Ochone, it's them opinions that's again' him. What was opinions invented for but to bring decent people into trouble!'

'How did he get into the scrape?'

'He wasn't in it at all, sir. This is how it comes about. We went away from Camberwell when our darlin' was took from us, and sailed to America. Teddy soon got in among the patriots there, and was to be sent to Ireland for something or other. Then the ould man took a longing to see home again, an' we all came back together. Then Dan was seized with fever after landin' in Cork, and went off afore we knew he was sick, a'most. About the same time our darlin' wanted me, and Teddy was left to hisself entirely.'

'That was unfortunate.'

'True for you, sir. He gave up workin', an' gave all his time to the Cause,—a black day for him, poor boy. Then he got known to the police as one of the patriots; an' now, when this dirty job is done, one blackguard swears he seen Teddy on the spot with a revolver. When they took him they found a revolver in his lodgin', and that's all they have again' him.'

'But how can you know that is all?'

'Because the boy was miles beyond the place at the time.'

'How can you be sure of that?'

'Because he was with myself, with *us* the whole evenin', an' stayed in the house all night.'

'If you can prove that clearly, your son is quite safe.'

'Lord bless you, sir, for them words!' cried the widow excitedly. 'Prove it! sure there's proof without end. They mightn't believe me, but there's no judge in the land would refuse to believe her; and there's the butler and Missus Harper and half a dozen that seen him in the house when the fightin' was goin' on.'

'You have not yet told me whose house he was in with you,' said Maurice.

'Why, the master's, of course—Colonel Cuthbert's. He hadn't seen our darlin' since she was took away from Camberwell, and they were talkin' away for ever so long before dinner and after. She'll tell you herself this minute, for she's in the carriage below waitin' for me, and as much troubled about the poor boy as myself.'

Maurice started at the announcement that she was so near, but recovered on the instant and replied coldly,—

'It is unnecessary for me to see Miss Cuthbert. I have listened to you, Mrs. O'Bryan, as your friend, not as your lawyer, and I am glad to be able to assure you that with such proof of his innocence as you can command, Teddy is in no danger so far as the death of the constable is concerned. His connection with the patriots, however, may involve him in some difficulty. I shall give you the address of a solicitor who will, I have no doubt, soon obtain his release.'

As he was sitting down to write the address there was a knock at the door, and he called carelessly, 'Come in.' When he raised his head he saw Miss Cuthbert within the room, and a footman just closing the door from without.

Their eyes met: his wavered for a second, the apparition was so unexpected; otherwise, the gaze on both sides was clear and steady as that of people who meet for the first time. He rose and bowed.

'I must apologise for my intrusion, Mr. Calthorpe,' she said promptly. 'My anxiety to learn your opinion of my friend's case is my excuse.'

'It is ample,' he said in a calm, business-like tone, as he offered a chair.

'Thank you.'

There was a little faintness in the tone.

'I trust that you are able to say from your experience that our friend's case is a good one?'

'Unfortunately, my experience in such cases does not count for much; but I have just been telling Mrs. O'Bryan that, in my opinion, he is safe.'

'I did not doubt it, but I am much relieved by hearing this from you. I wish to ask one question on my own account. Shall I be required to appear in court as a witness? I ask this because, although I am quite ready to do so if necessary, I am anxious to avoid it if possible, for family reasons.'

'I am afraid it will be necessary. But that question will be best answered by the solicitor who undertakes the case; and it is advisable that you should see one immediately. This gentleman, I have no doubt, will do what he can for Mrs. O'Bryan's son.'

He handed to the widow the piece of paper on which he had written the solicitor's address. The good woman expressed her gratitude with Hibernian warmth, promising to return soon to report progress.

'I can only thank you again, Mr. Calthorpe,' said Miss Cuthbert calmly. They bowed; he opened the door with the same politeness which he would have shown to a perfect stranger, and she passed out.

The door closed: it was all over—so quietly, so politely; they had spoken to each other again, and there had not been one word more than the business in hand demanded.

Their lives were indeed divided.

*(To be concluded.)*

# BELGRAVIA

DECEMBER 1881.

## Joseph's Coat.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE day waned, a dreary wind blew up the clouds from the leaden horizon, the clouds discharged themselves in a miserable drizzling fall, but the sleepers in Bowker's house lay still and slept, with breathings light or heavy. Just as night was falling, Ethel's dreams carried her into the mine once more, and after long ages of waiting there she heard a scraping and rasping at the wall, and with a great shock of hope became suddenly awake. The noise resolved itself into the stirring of a fire below, and as she listened she could hear another sound which she was not slow to interpret—the sound, namely, of John Keen's voice in rapid undertoned speech. She arranged her hair and dress, and unwilling to disturb Dinah, who still slumbered, she opened the door with extreme quiet, and descended the steps which led directly into the kitchen. Silently as she went, the one wakeful inmate of the kitchen heard her, and looked up. She saw his face in the firelight, and paused for a moment on the stairs, but recovering her self-possession, held on her way, and without a word, or a sign that she noticed George's presence, she passed him, and, opening the door, looked out upon the wildly driving clouds and the bleak, darkened country.

Perhaps it was a part of what little good there was in him that young George, when he thought of Ethel, felt at his wickedest and least worthy. The thought of nobody else had such power to reproach him. And now, in spite of the sense of injury he had been nursing for the past two or three hours until the glowing coals had blazed with clear resentment, her presence suddenly put out the fire of wrath, and left him with a sick coldness at the heart.



Ethel stood outside in the open door, raged at by sudden gusts of wind and beaten by storms of rain, but not heeding them or knowing of them. It could scarcely fail to strike young George that he was in the way. It did so strike him, and he seized his hat and made for the road; but Ethel standing in the middle of the doorway, he found it necessary to speak to her.

'Miss Donne,' said young George shakily, and she turned, 'I can only be a trouble to you if I stay. I have been watching poor Keen, but I shall not be wanted any longer now.'

She made room for him to pass, and as she did so he read rightly the shrinking of her figure to avoid the merest touch of contact of her garments with his. She had loved him, as he knew, most dearly, and now she loathed him so. That was his hideous ill-fortune—not his own fault at all? something seemed to ask within. His fault! he could but answer—Had he not been a villain all along? Had he ever been worthy to touch her, to be near her, to look at her? Was it any wonder that she hated him? He was hot, and cold, and sick, and dizzy all at once, as he thought of the scene in the magistrate's office. But for that, he would not have seemed to himself quite so much of a hound as now. He had nowhere to go to and no money, and he was ashamed to show himself in the town, and certain that no one there would trust him for the value of one penny piece after what had happened. So he wandered up and down outside the house in the rain, waiting till the rest should awake and go away, when he might make an appeal to his father and draw some small supplies. He had no hope of generosity in that quarter, and the future looked hard to him. He wove old George's promise into the tissue of his thoughts, and it helped him to the design of some curious patterns; but under existing circumstances, the contemplation of the texture, howsoever its shifting patterns varied, gave him little comfort.

Meanwhile, Ethel lit a candle, and shading it carefully from the sick man's face, sat down to her watch. John was murmuring, though he still slept, and again and again she heard her own name. Sometimes he spoke of her, and sometimes to her, but there was nothing else in all his thoughts than her and her safety. He was still in the mine waiting for rescue, and once he opened his eyes, struggled into a half-upright posture, and, unconscious of the hands that controlled him, called loudly for her.

'She's dead!' he cried. 'You're hiding it from me. She's dead!'

'No, no,' said Ethel, trying to soothe him. 'Don't you know me, Mr. Keen?'

He cried out again that she was dead, but by-and-by, being

altogether weak and helpless, he permitted her to set him down and arrange his clothes and pillows, and after some few more cries and murmurings, which were all of her, he fell asleep. She sat watching him; his pale face, heavy eyelids, and tumbled curls of long hair looking ghostly in the shadow where he lay: and her whole heart was filled with a pitying admiration. Such a gallant, ready fellow he had been!—so unobtrusively devoted, plotting in that quiet Wrethedale life to make her happy, and never permitting himself to be seen in it; loving her so all the time, and never saying a word of it lest he should hurt her. To think of these things was to travel anew upon the beginning of a road you thought the road of folly, Ethel, and had vowed never again to set foot in. Ah! who knows of these things, or how they come? A longing to set foot in that road again? Scarcely as yet. But such a pity in her heart, and such a faith in the real manly honesty and truth of this poor wounded youngster as by-and-by may grow to that. And you shall not think my favourite maid unmaidenly, or sudden in having even made so small a step backwards towards love's demesne of glamour. To have waited four days and nights in face of death beside this true man who dearly loved her, and to have him chiefly to think of all the while, and him to nurse and soothe, and to hear him ever and always in his greatest pain and his most awful dreams calling on her name, to admire his courage and resource and hear them praised by all around, and to pity him with all her heart, was an education likely to move her swiftly if she moved at all.

She had sat for a long time watching and thinking, when a movement in the upper room and on the stairs attracted her attention, and Dinah appeared.

'Where is he?' whispered Dinah, blushing and trembling like a girl.

'I don't know,' answered Ethel in the same cautious tone, 'but there is some one in the next room. Listen. You can hear breathing.'

They listened, and heard the steady coming and going of a deep breath. Dinah crept to the door, and, noiselessly opening it, looked in. The little parlour faced westward, and through the curtained windows she could see a great jagged line of pale yellow where the sun had gone down and the clouds were slowly severing, and in the faint and uncertain light this line of pale yellow reflected into the room she could just distinguish Joe's figure from that of Cheston. She knelt down by his side and looked at him with hungry heart and eyes, and yearned to throw herself upon his bosom and clasp him in her arms. She knew the story of his

wanderings now, as well as Ethel and Sir Sydney knew it. She knew old George's wicked tale of her second marriage, and somehow to Dinah's mind the two first years during which errant Joe had been silent were as nothing. She stooped and kissed his hand and let a tear fall upon it, but the sleeper never stirred. For those in danger there had been some little rest, for people do sleep in the face of death, and sleep calmly with blissful innocent dreams at times, but for him, since the first news came until a few hours ago, there had been no possibility of slumber. Seeing how wrapped in sleep he was, Dinah took courage and kissed his hand again, and since yielding to the impulse made it stronger, she slid her arm beneath his head and kissed his cheek very softly and nestled down beside him, watching him until in the fast-gathering darkness his face was lost and she could only fancy it.

But after half an hour she rose and stole silently back to Ethel.

'Is there any news of *him*, my dear? Forgive me asking. Have you heard of him?'

'Yes,' said Ethel, whispering. 'He was here an hour or two ago. He went out when I came down.'

The mother's right was indisputable. Dinah could not be blamed for loving the child of her own body, but Ethel had yet to take herself to task for a half-inclination to think the love unreasonable. The very thought of young George grated on every nerve in her soul, and yet she knew, though with fear and self-reproach, that she was beginning to be happy again. The why and wherefore of this new contentment she either did not know or would not for a second acknowledge to herself.

Dinah passed like a ghost to the rearward door and looked out into the night. In a little while she heard a footstep, and as it came nearer she fluttered out into the darkness to meet it.

'Is that you, George?' she asked.

'Yes,' he answered.

'Oh, George,' she cried, 'what are you out here for?'

'I couldn't stop in the house,' he answered doggedly. 'To remind everybody——'

He broke off abruptly and was silent.

'You're wet through,' said Dinah, laying her hands upon him. 'Don't wait here, my dear. Go somewhere and get a change of clothes, and——'

'I can't get anything,' George answered bitterly. 'I haven't got a penny in the world, and who would trust me?'

'Oh, George,' cried Dinah, 'I've plenty of money now. Mr. Keen sent me some money the day before we went down the pit, and

I've got it with me. Here! Go to the hotel we stayed at in Birmingham, an' have a glass of somethin' warm afore you start. An' let us know where you are, an' oh, George, George, do try to be a good lad now. Won't you, my darlin'—won't you? an' with God's blessin' we'll be happy after all. Try to be a good lad again. Do, dear, do.'

She was embracing him again with tears, heedless of his rain-soaked garments.

'I'll try,' said the wretched George, weeping also. 'I don't deserve your goodness. The best thing I could do for everybody would be to make a hole in the water somewhere and rid the world of such a burden.'

There was even in the young man's mind a remote idea in favour of carrying this programme into execution, though there was probably little hope of the remote idea coming nearer. But it terrified Dinah.

'No, no, George,' she broke out, clinging to him.

'I'm a disgrace to everybody,' said George, weeping. 'I'm in everybody's way.'

'No, George, no,' cried Dinah, and she clung to him still and extorted from him solemn promises that he would live and be good; and at last with an aching heart she let him go, and watched his figure as it melted from her sight in the darkness.

She waited in the night a little while after this, to compose herself, and then returned. Ethel was still keeping watch by John Keen, and all the sleepers in the little house were sound. The two women found themselves food and made tea, moving noiselessly. It was midnight when Cheston awoke with a great yawn, and stumbled sleepily in to speak to them, but Joe still slept on, and Dinah, going to look at him, had terrible tremors about his never waking any more, until his regular heavy breathing reassured her. At one in the morning the Bowker family appeared, Mr. Bowker coming first in search for lucifer matches, the brew-house fire having long since gone out.

'Let him sleep, mister,' said William. 'He's never closed a eye till this arternoon sence we heerd the news, an' that's more'n four nights an' days ago.'

Having gone away to light the fire, he returned, and at Sir Sydney's invitation sat down. They talked in low voices in consideration of the patient, who was by this time sound asleep again, and there was little mystery in the story left before they had done with it. William had been told of uncle George's gift of a hundred pounds to Joe, and the narration of it softened all hearts to the hard old man. He could not have begun to plot evil then,

they thought, and could only have yielded to a sudden temptation. Mrs. Bowker made more tea, and bringing it into the kitchen with her own hands pressed it upon them, and in the growing twilight they sat sipping together until a sound arose in the next room as of stretching and yawning, and a minute later Joe was amongst them. It was curious, and to everybody there a little touching, to notice the extreme diffidence with which the long-divided pair met each other. But by common consent room was made for Joe to sit next to Dinah, and by-and-by, as the others sat and talked, it was noticed that the silent two had stolen each a hand towards the other's, and thus in the chill growing twilight and the flickering light of the fire they sat handed, looking at each other now and then, but quite wordless. It was broad daylight, though chill and dark even then, so lowering was the weather, when Miss Dorothea descended; and one of the younger branches of the house of Bowker being despatched for the Baronet's carriage, returned with it in the space of half an hour in triumph side by side with the coachman.

'I can get a cab and follow you afterwards,' said Ethel, 'but until the doctor arrives I shall stay with Mr. Keen.'

Nobody ventured to offer any remonstrance except Cheston, who murmured something about being in Mr. Bowker's way.

'Not a bit of it, mister,' cried William. 'It meks the hearth brighter like to see her theer. An' my missis,' added Mr. Bowker, turning upon her, 'is as willin' as willin', but hers's never been used to nursin' sick gentlefolks, an' it'll be as well to ha' one of his own sort along of him till the doctor's seen him again an' gi'en me orders about him.'

So they drove away in such uplifted silent thanksgiving of heart as no words of mine can tell, and Ethel was left behind with her wounded lover, whom she had not yet learned to love. Young Bowker called his mother and father from the room.

'Leave 'em to 'emsens,' he said. 'Whether he'll live or die theer's no sayin', but all the while as we was down nothin' 'ud satisfy him but he must have her settin' next to him, an' he ho'din' her hand an' talkin' to her.'

'Does her care for him?' asked Mrs. Bowker.

'I do' know,' her son answered; 'but he cares for her. An' all the time he's been in the fever he's been a-callin' out, "Ethel my love," and "Ethel my darlin'," an' sayin', "I'm glad to die for you." Wasn't it her as was engaged to young Banks?'

'Yis, yis,' said his father. 'But young Keen's worth a hundred million on him, an' p'raps her's a-findin' that out. Leave 'em to 'emsens.'

Ethel, unconscious of the interest she excited, sat on still until the doctor came. No improvement yet. Had the patient been anyhow excited? No, they told him; he had even slept nearly the whole of the time since yesterday's visit.

'I am sorry to tell you,' said the doctor to Miss Donne, 'that I don't like the look of things at all. I shall act on Sir Sydney's instructions and call in a first-rate man from Birmingham.'

'Do all you can,' Ethel implored him. 'He saved all our lives.'

'What can be done shall be done,' answered the doctor; and with that he went away.

'He saved our lives,' said Ethel to Mrs. Bowker. 'Will you let me stay here till we hear the news—till the other doctor comes?'

'Stay?' said that good woman, 'an' welcome!'

So Ethel stayed, and the great local man arriving gave a more decided and more favourable opinion than his country colleague. With care and attention the patient would probably recover. But the case was grave. The great man having delivered his verdict went away again, promising to return on the morrow, and still Ethel waited. The lesser light of science, a sound reliable man of the old school, called twice or thrice during the day, and found her always at her post. She sent a special messenger to Dinah explaining her purposes, and Dinah reading between the lines could not fail to think of George and the happiness and honour he had sacrificed. In brief, Ethel stayed beneath Mr. Bowker's roof one week, and Sir Sydney made calls upon her twice with Joe and twice with Dinah. Before that time had expired John had recovered consciousness, and was believed to be fairly out of danger.

On the last night of Ethel's stay an interview occurred between John and her which probably accelerated her departure. The Bowker family were bivouacked in the parlour, feeling singularly abroad and un-at-home there, and Ethel and John were alone in the kitchen. The invalid lay in his improvised bed, propped up with pillows, his redundant curls all shorn, his eyes remarkably hollow, and his cheeks remarkably thin and pale. Ethel was preparing beef-tea for him, and his eyes, looking supernaturally large, followed her about the place with a pleased languor. When at last she brought it to him, he took the hand that held the cup, and showed no disposition to relinquish it. A very little violence would have released the hand, but who could be violent with an invalid, especially with an invalid whose valour and foresight had just saved so many lives?

'You are very kind to me,' John murmured, holding the hand

and the cup together in such a way that it was difficult to let the cup go without spilling its contents.

'We have reason to be grateful to you, Mr. Keen,' said Ethel. 'All of us. We owe you our lives.'

'I owe you mine in turn,' said John, holding the hand a little tighter. 'I knew you were about me all the while. Even when I was delirious I seemed to know it. I should have died without you. You don't mind my loving you?' demanded the unconventional young man.

Now, what possible answer could a young woman make to a question of that sort?

'I couldn't help it,' John continued. 'I loved you before I had known you a week. I wonder any fellow who ever saw you cares to look at another woman.'

'You are weak, Mr. Keen,' said Ethel, striving gently to release her hand. 'You must not excite yourself by talking.'

She moved her disengaged hand to the tea-cup to steady it in the struggle, and the insolent invalid absolutely took that also, and being really near a physical collapse, closed his eyes and dropped his head, but held on to the hands.

'Let me give you your beef-tea,' said Ethel.

'If you won't go away afterwards,' said John.

'I will stay,' Ethel answered, and he released her, and for a while lay like one comatose, to her great dismay. But in a little time he rallied and submitted to be fed with a spoon, and was extremely orderly and quiet until Ethel made a movement as if to rise.

'No,' said John feebly, and with one of the thin hands that lay outside the counterpane he caught one of hers, and taking it to his lips he mumbled it there feebly. 'Let me cheat myself for a day or two till I get stronger,' he said. 'Don't think ill of me. I'm very weak at present. I shall know better by-and-by.'

And he fell to kissing the hand so passionately that Ethel withdrew it straightway in fear for him, and half by virginal instinct.

'Forgive me,' said John humbly, and she pitied him so that she gave him the hand back again, and he closed both his upon it, and lay quite still in a sort of prostrated rapture.

'I shall be sorry to get well again,' quoth John after a pause.

'Why, Mr. Keen?' asked Ethel.

'I shall leave this fool's paradise when I'm better,' said John, with a tear born of weakness in each eye. 'I'd rather die like this than live to part from you.'

She said nothing, but turned and looked at him with a mourn-

ful pitying tenderness. He looked back at her straight into her eyes.

'I love you,' he said in a half whisper, his lips scarcely moving. 'I love you. I *do* love you!'

And Ethel never knew how it happened, but his eyes seemed in some strange way to draw her to him, and she stooped slowly over him and kissed him on the lips. John threw an arm about her neck and kissed her back again, with a vigour surprising in a man who had so lately had so many bones broken. She struggled gently to be free of him, being half afraid of him and wholly afraid of herself, but—

'Let me die like this,' said John, and lying back again fell into a placid sleep.

When she was assured that he really was asleep the girl kissed him again. And it is remarkable that she was not yet sure she loved him. Only, he was so handsome and so brave and good, and he had suffered so much, and she had such a pity for him and such an admiration.

But when in the course of two or three hours the invalid awoke, and of his own initiative desired beef-tea, he was absolutely beyond control, and insisted on kissing her fingers every time they approached his lips. And at last this shy young man's insolence reached to such a pitch, encouraged doubtless by her non-resistance, that he said :

'Ethel, kiss me.' And so overcome was Miss Donne by this command that she obeyed him. 'You won't send me away when I get better, will you?' asked John. 'You'll get to like me a bit, won't you? You'll let me go on loving you?'

'Yes,' she whispered.

And in this unexampled fashion was a modest reticent good girl, within little more than the space of two years, brought to be in love with two men, and to confess it to them both. She was angry at herself; she thought it unmaidenly, she called herself shallow-hearted, and even shed some secret tears over the phantom of that lost rascal George, who did still at times revisit the glimpses of the moon.

'You are getting stronger now, Mr. Keen,' said Miss Donne, 'and I shall come and see you sometimes, but I must go back to Dinah in the morning.'

'No,' said John.

'Yes, Mr. Keen,' said Ethel. 'I must go.'

'Call me John,' said the young man who had always until now been so shy and reticent. Ethel obeyed him, in a whisper. Then, having secured that point, John besought her to stay a little



longer, but in that respect she was adamant. But she promised to see him every day, and they took tender farewell of each other; Ethel still distrustful and uncertain of herself, and full of maidenly shame at being so cheaply captured. She had vowed never to care for any man again, and yet he had suffered so, and was so good, and loved her so dearly. She did not quite love him yet, but only took pity on him, and John seemed tolerably contented with it. The doctors fairly stared at him next day, he made so much advance.

The youngest Bowker had been sent for a cab, and Ethel had gone away before either of the doctors came. She went straight, of course, to Cheston's house, and the Baronet came out to receive her as the cab drove up the avenue.

'And how is the patient?' he asked.

'Better,' returned Ethel, 'much better. How is Mrs. Bushell, Sir Sydney?'

A shade came across the genial Baronet's face.

'Miss Donne,' he answered, 'I don't know what to make of things in that quarter at all. You had better see her yourself.'

'What is the matter?' cried Ethel in alarm.

'Lunacy's the matter, according to the best of my belief,' said Cheston testily, though he laughed a second later. 'Go and see her.'

Ethel ran upstairs to Dinah's room, and found her sitting there alone, looking pale and dejected.

'Where is your husband, Dinah?' asked the girl when the first greetings were over.

'He's staying at the hotel in Birmingham,' said Dinah with tremulous lips. 'He's very kind and good, my dear, and he writes me beautiful letters, and he's been here twice to see me, but——' Dinah suppressed with effort an inclination to cry, and Ethel said indignantly,

'Dinah, he ought to be ashamed of himself. Give up thinking about him, my dear.'

'No, no,' said Dinah. 'You don't understand.'

'I don't indeed,' responded Ethel.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

'MY DEAR WIFE—'

Thus far Joseph Bushell, with a sheet of letter-paper otherwise blank before him. Joe sat in his own room in the Birmingham hotel, and bit disconsolately at the feather of his pen. A letter of Dinah's lay before him, and whenever he took it up and looked at

it, as he did often, a swelling arose in his throat, and he found it necessary to get up and pace about the room a little to recover himself. The gist of Dinah's letter was simply this. Let the past bury its dead. I am your faithful and loving wife now just as much as when you went away. Don't desert me again, or you will break my heart. The letter said these things over and over again, but it contrived to say little more.

'She must know something more of me,' said Joe, pacing up and down the room, 'before I can ask her to accept me again as her life companion. She ought to be sure of me. And I feel,' he murmured to the walls—'I feel as if we ought to be married again, as if a return to her were somehow an attack upon her purity. We ought to be married again. It isn't bigamy, I suppose,' said Joe with a wretched little grin, 'to be married twice to one's own wife. I suppose it's legal. Cheston says young Keen is getting strong again. I'll go and ask young Keen's advice.'

So he shoved all his papers loose and crumpled into a writing-desk, locked them up, took his hat, and set out upon his journey. The day was bright and cheerful after recent rains, and a spring-like feeling was in the air. Nobody is entirely insensible to such influences, and they were strong on Joe Bushell as he walked sturdily on again in the month of spring. Spring came again, and seemed to bring some promise of a new spring of life for Dinah and for him. In spite of all the self-accusations he had written to her, in spite of the self-accusing things he had said to her, Dinah would and could see nothing in Joe's prolonged absence but the result of Uncle George's wickedness.

'If you'd ha' been fortunate, Joe,' she had said to him, 'and had made enough to keep me afore he wrote that wicked letter, wouldn't you ha' sent for me, or come back to me?'

And he had been compelled to answer, 'Yes,' though he strove to inculcate himself by showing that he had acted like a fool and like a coward, to all of which Dinah lent an unbelieving ear. And the more Joe accused himself, the more eager Dinah was to believe the best of him; and the worse things he said of himself, the better man she thought him. For he could but tell her that wickedly and basely as he had acted, he had been true to her in heart and life, and that was enough for Dinah. A hard and cruel fate, with old George as the controller of it, had come between them—that was all—and she had no blame for Joe. Not even now, when his scruples were again dividing them, and when she would have taken him back with her whole heart and soul, could she blame him. Fate was hard, and always had been hard, but Joe was not to blame. 'Commend me to my kind lord,' said Desdemona with

her dying breath, and if Joe Bushell had turned Othelloish in act and fancy, Dinah would probably have had no harsher farewell for him. This is in the nature of women sometimes: and if it leads to misery, it breeds happiness as well; such happiness, perhaps, as a heart otherwise put together can never know, or do more than dream of.

As Joe walked on, his spirits rose higher and higher. He had no fear of his own faith for the future. Whatever happened, he would be true to Dinah, and would guard her so gently that the end of her life should be sweet to her. Only, a little pause, for the sake of the delicacy of his own thoughts about her, seemed necessary; a new courtship—they had been so long apart—a new ceremonial of some sort to bring them together again, to renew a tie so strained and weakened by the lapse of time that it felt to him a thing broken and faded almost into nothing.

The road he took led him for some four-and-a-half miles over the ground he had travelled when he walked to catch the London train at almost the beginning of this story, and the way was changed, as he was. There were new landmarks on the road, as there were new landmarks in his history, and many of the old ones were clean gone, as in his history likewise. And since he walked now, not in the old direction, but retracing those youthful steps, this special present journey seemed to have a special promise in it, as if it were only now that he was really coming back again to love and duty.

It is not at all an unusual thing for two or even three people to come to a resolution on the same day; and almost at the very moment when Joe resolved upon a visit to John Keen, old George Bushell set out upon a visit to the convalescent lawyer. And the history of old George's visit was briefly this: The hand of Heaven in judgment had seemed to his wicked superstitious old soul to weigh so heavily upon him, and the way of disarming its vengeance seemed so clear, that within a day or two of his interview with his whilom private secretary, he had sent a note to Mr. Packmore, requesting that gentleman's presence at a settled hour. At the settled hour Mr. Packmore came, and learned that he had been sent for to alter George's will, and learning, further, in what direction the alteration was proposed, was greatly disturbed, and became so doubtful of old George's sanity that he refused, after a lengthy squabble, to have anything to do with the matter.

'My money's mine, ain't it?' asked old George of his stubborn counsellor,

'And my reputation is mine, sir,' returned Mr. Packmore stiffly. 'And my professional probity is mine, sir. And I will have nothing to do with a scheme which seems to me, sir, to be no less than crackbrained.'

'I didn't send for you o' purpose to be insulted, Packmore,' said old George, with a dignity more wooden even than of old. 'An' I'll tell you what. You send me all the business dockyments you've got o' mine, an' send your bill in, an' I'll send a cheque an' ha' done wi' you. Talk to me about bein' crackbrained!' he quavered, getting on his legs and shaking both his sticks at the conveyancer. 'I'm as sound i' my mind as iver I was, thank God, an' I know what I'm a-doin'. But I don't want no unwillin' service, an' I don't want no reflections on my intellec', thenk you. An' you can get out o' my house, an' send my dockyments at your earliest convenience.'

Mr. Packmore at this had bowed with exceeding stiffness and retired. And now, old George, after new cogitations, had bethought him of John Keen, who knew the whole story (which it was not easy to tell to Mr. Packmore), and who would know his reasons, and would make his will in this amended fashion without misgiving. He let the time slip by, however, until, falling into a state of querulous rage with Mrs. Bullus one day, he felt a recurrence of his old pains and terrors, and went off headlong on his two sticks to seek the lawyer.

'Is Mr. Keen well enough to see a body?' he asked of Mrs. Bowker.

'He's a-sittin' up a-readin',' said that estimable woman, who for reasons of her own had no affection for old George, and answered him somewhat scornfully.

'Is he well enough to see a body?' demanded George again.

'I'll ask him,' returned Mrs. Bowker, disappearing. 'You can come in,' she said ungraciously when she returned; and old George, entering, found himself face to face with the lawyer, who was sitting up in bed in the parlour, propped with pillows, and looking like a rakish ghost in a smoking-cap which set so much to the side of his head that it totally obscured one ear. The smoking-cap had fitted him once upon a time, but now that his locks were so closely shorn it was ridiculously too big for him.

'Be you well enough to do a minute or two's talk on important business, Mr. Keen?' asked old George.

'Yes,' said John, 'I think so. Take a seat.'

Mrs. Bowker slammed the door and went out, repenting herself a moment later on account of the invalid. Old George began to unfold his purpose, slowly.

'Mr. Keen,' he said, 'I'm come to you because you know everythin' appertainin' to me an' my lung-lost nevw Joseph, an' my late private seckitary, knowed beforetime as George Banks.'

'Yes,' said John.

'It's been o' my mind,' said old George, 'as I might ha' acted straighter than I did, an' what I did as was wrong I want to mek up for.'

'Yes,' said John again.

'I'm a-gettin' main old now,' George renewed, 'and I feel as if I wa' n't lung for this world. And I want to do right afore I leave it.'

'I am very glad to hear you speak in this way, Mr. Bushell,' said John, in whom his recent illness and danger had left many grave thoughts behind them. 'Your coming here,' he added, seeing that old George paused nervously, 'seems to indicate that I can be of use to you. Can I?'

'Yes,' returned old George. 'But gi' me time. Gi' me time.' He sat for a moment or two, with a hand on either stick quavering there. 'I allays meant to be respectable an' a God-fearin' man. An' I gi'en my nevw Joseph a hunderd pound to run away wi', an' I've niver been hard—not over an' above—wi' the poor. An' what wrong-doin' I fell into, Mr. Keen, I've been sore punished for, an' I want to mek things straight again, an' die wi' a clean conscience.' There he paused again and looked up at John with an uncertain glance easily abashed. 'I'm a-goin',' he continued, 'to have a noo will made, I am, an' I'm a-goin' to leave everythin' equal divided betwixt my nephew Joseph an' my late private secretary, knowed beforehand as George Banks. Everythin' equal divided betwixt them two.'

There was a something in old George's manner which John construed rightly as conveying an expectation that he would be surprised at this and would applaud it as a moral action.

'I had always heard,' said John, 'that it was your intention to found an institute and hospital. That was never made a secret.'

It never had been, and that fact made it none the easier for old George to satisfy affrighted conscience and angry Heaven.

'Such was my intention, Mr. Keen,' said he; 'but I'm now bended on another course, so to speak. Will you carry out them theer instructions?'

'Certainly, Mr. Bushell,' returned John. 'Assuredly, if you wish it so. Do you attach any conditions?'

'No,' said old George, 'no conditions. Divided equal betwixt 'em;' with a heavy sigh, 'That's all. Folks 'll talk, I count, but I've got my peace to mek wi' Them Above, Mr. Keen, an' I'm

a-gettin' main old, an' I ain't been all I should ha' been, an' I'm a good deal broke wi' trouble, an' I don't look to last lung.'

'I believe, Mr. Bushell,' said John, 'that you are trying to do what seems to you to be a duty, and I can understand how hard it is. But you will have the sympathy of all who understand your motives; and as for those who don't, what matter?'

'Ah,' said old George, 'what matter, indeed! These things is betwixt a man an' his conscience. I don't want to hurry you, for it's plain to be seen as you're still sickly. But as soon as you can, Mr. Keen, as soon as you can.'

Old George, when John really came to look at him and in his own mind to contrast him with what he had been, was wonderfully changed and pitifully broken, insomuch that the wrong-doer extracted a sharp twinge of pity from the honest man.

'It's the meanest proverb ever put in print,' thought John to himself, 'but it's true for all that—Honesty is the best policy.'

Old George did not seem to have anything to add to the instructions he had already given, but he sat with somewhat stertorous breathing, and looked at the pattern of the gaudy carpet, pushing one of his shaky sticks about it as if he followed the design. He had not sat thus silent for a minute when a tap came to the door.

'I'm a-goin' now, Mr. Keen,' said George, 'an' I can open your door for you. Good-bye. You send word to me when you're ready, will you?'

John promised, and the old fellow crawled forward, leaning on his two sticks, and shufflingly set both of them in one hand whilst he opened the door. And there before him stood a bearded man of middle age whom he did not know. But the bearded man knew him, and to his terror and amazement said very quietly:

'My uncle George!'

Uncle George showing no sign of any inclination to move, the new-comer passed him and closed the door. Then, with his hands in his jacket pockets, he turned and confronted uncle George, and looked at him, up and down.

'Be you my newew Joseph?' asked George in his shaky voice. He knew it well enough now, though he had not recognised him at first.

Joe could not trust himself as yet to say a word in the presence of this old traitor. There were too many terrible thoughts revived by the sight of him, and too great a spirit of natural vengeance stirred to make speech seem safe.

'I'm a-tryin' to put everythin' straight again as I set crooked, Joseph,' said George, his eyes sinking before his nephew's gaze.

'I own I acted bad towards you, but I've been punished for it heavy. Heavy, Joseph. An' I'm a-tryin' wi' God's help to straighten things out a bit.'

'We're a very pretty family!' said Joe with great bitterness, speaking to himself. 'I can see that you're better, Keen,' he continued in a changed voice, turning towards John; 'I had something to say to you. I'll call again when you are disengaged.'

'I'm a-goin' now,' quavered uncle George. 'I've been a-tryin' to straighten things, Joseph. You ask lawyer Keen if I ain't been a-tryin' to straighten things.'

Joe made no response to this, and Uncle George began to fumble at the door again. He shook so, and went about the simple business in such a helpless fashion, that Joe turned the handle for him.

'Thank you, Joseph,' said the old fellow, turning his fishy eyes upon him shiftily. 'I meant well by you at the beginnin'. I give you a hunderd pound to run away wi', an' I meant well by you at the beginnin'. But I was tempted sudden, Joseph, an' I've been a bad man, I'm afeard. But I'm a-trying to set things straight again.'

Joe said nothing, and Uncle George with much difficulty made off. His nephew closed the door behind him.

'Is that the first time you've seen him since you left England?' asked John.

Joe nodded gravely and drew up a chair to the bedside.

'When do you think you'll be about again, Keen?' he asked after a pause.

'Well,' said John, 'I want to get up now, and feel quite equal to it, but the doctors won't have it. I suppose they're right,' he added with a sigh.

'You know what we all owe you,' said Joe.

'You know what we all owe *you*,' returned John.

'Keen,' said Joe suddenly, 'I want to speak to you upon a delicate matter. My wife and I are absolutely reconciled.'

'I am heartily glad of it,' answered John. 'Heartily glad.'

'But we are still divided by a—by a sentiment, I suppose I must call it. We have been so long apart. Is a second marriage a legal possibility?'

'A possibility,' said John, 'yes. But not a necessity.'

'If a possibility,' answered Joe, 'certainly a necessity.'

'As satisfying the sentiment you spoke of?'

'Yes.'

'If you feel the necessity, you might get a clergyman to read the service through; dispensing with the purely legal formalities.'

'Yes?' said Joe. 'They are not needed, of course.'

'Not at all.'

A knock at the inner door made an interruption here, and Mrs. Bowker entered. Mrs. Bowker was sorry to interrupt, but Mr. Keen must have beef-tea and toast at this juncture, punctually at midday.

'Theer's the clock a-strikin',' said Mrs. Bowker in great triumph, as indicating her own precision of obedience to the doctor's orders.

Mr. Keen was of opinion that he could help himself with perfect ease, but Mrs. Bowker would not hear of it, and insisted upon feeding the patient with her own hands. So John being comfortably tucked into a clean towel, a little coarse in material but of snowy whiteness, was fed with provoking slowness by his hostess. Mrs. Bowker was of opinion that the measures taken with the rescued were still necessary, and so made great pauses between each spoonful, and took eager observations of the patient, as if in expectation of asphyxial symptoms.

'Let me drink it up,' said John. 'I want to talk with Mr. Bushell.'

'Health's o' more importance than any amount o' talkin', an' I'm sure Mr. Bushell don't want to see you a-gorgin' yourself to talk to *him*,' said Mrs. Bowker.

Joe laughed and said, 'Certainly not,' and the slow process went on. When in the course of a half-hour it was finished Mr. Keen's hands and face must be sponged with luke-warm water, and his beard combed and brushed to make him presentable to the doctor.

'An' somebody else as we knowin' on, eh, Mr. Keen?' said the hostess knowingly.

At this sally John blushed and laughed, and the sound of wheels being heard at that moment, Mrs. Bowker laughed triumphantly, whisked to the door and opened it, and a minute later admitted Ethel. The girl came in beaming, but stopped short at the sight of Joe, and gave him a frozen little nod.

'I'll call again, Keen,' said Joe, shaking hands with the patient. 'I'll look in again this afternoon.'

'Do,' said John heartily, but perhaps not sorry to be alone with Ethel. 'I shall be glad to see you.'

Joe bowed to Ethel (who responded by another frozen little nod), and went his way.

'My darling!' cried John—they had got so far by this time—'you do him less than justice.'



'Why,' cried Ethel, with a flush of warm indignation, 'does the worthless fellow stand shilly-shallying here when the best woman in the world is waiting and breaking her heart for him, and he knows it?'

John admired her all the more, if that were possible, for this outbreak, but he said only :

'Shall I tell you why?'

'If there is a reason,' said Ethel, a little disdainful still, 'I should like to hear it.'

'There is a reason,' answered John. 'They have been so long apart, that he feels some sort of formal ratification of their old union necessary before they begin life together again. He wants some new solemnity between them to piece the tie so long broken.'

'They are man and wife,' cried Ethel.

'Legally, of course they are,' John answered, patting one of her hands with his. 'But you can understand the sense of division which has come upon him. Think more gently of him, darling. Think of what we owe him.'

'It was you who saved us all,' she protested.

'You would have found my help worth very little,' John said gravely, 'if it had not been for his.'

'Is he going back to Dinah?'

'Yes. But I have a scheme in my own mind which I am going to propose to him when he comes this afternoon.'

'What is it?'

'It depends on you.'

'On me?'

'On you.'

'What is it?' she asked again.

John, leaning nearer on his pillows, whispered his scheme to her. She heard him out, and answered 'No.'

'Not for Dinah's sake as well as mine?' pleaded John, who evidently set great store by this scheme of his.

'No,' she said again, but in a way which was scarcely negative.

'It is the very thing,' said John with cheerful emphasis, 'the very thing.' And with those wiles which happy lovers use he pressed his case until at last she yielded.

'May I tell him?'

'I suppose he must know,' she answered with a pleasant confusion.

'I suppose so,' said John, with a look of exultation on his face. 'Will you wait till he returns and take the news to Dinah?'

'Yes,' she answered, and he opening his arms for her, she arose and stooped and kissed him. The eyes of both were moist with

the dew of happiness as they sat and looked at each other, a moment later, hand in hand.

'Do you know, John,' she said after a blissful pause, 'I am almost sorry for that wicked old man, hard as he has been.'

'Old Bushell?' asked John.

'Yes. I should have been earlier here this morning if I had not met him upon the way. Sir Sydney's coachman was very near driving over him upon the road, and he seemed quite helpless. He knew the coachman and asked if he would drive him home, and said he felt quite unable to walk. Of course I asked him to get into the carriage, but the man and I had to help him. I wanted to leave him there and walk on, but he was evidently so ill that I was afraid to do it. So we took him home and waited until the doctor came. And whilst I waited he told me what he had been out for. I really think he wants to do what seems to be his duty now. It seems only the other day since he was a stout healthy man, and now what a wreck he is! He cried in quite a pitiful way whilst he was talking, and he seemed to cling to me so, because I pitied him and spoke kindly to him. He begged me so hard to go and see him again that I couldn't help promising. I had meant to call again this afternoon, but I must lose no time in carrying back this news to Dinah.'

There she blushed a little and drooped the hazel eyes into which John looked so proudly and so fondly.

'Yes,' said John, 'he's nearly broken. He's been a terrible old rogue, but he has suffered for it. It was like parting with his soul to lose the money he had held so long.'

'I don't think he can live long, John. I asked him to see a clergyman, but he said, "No, no. You come an' talk about good things to me. You'll do me more good than a parson."'

'So you will,' said John.

And there again, as happy lovers will, and as they have a right to, they fell to talking of their own affairs. Joe meantime rambled lonely, but not downhearted now, and gave God thanks humbly, and with deep penitence and lofty longings towards the future. In two hours' time he returned to the cottage, and finding Ethel still there would have retired again, but John forbade him and called him in. Then, Ethel having joined Mrs. Bowker in the kitchen, John summoned his visitor to the seat she had vacated.

'Bushell,' he said, 'congratulate me. I am going to be married.'

'I congratulate you with all my heart,' said Joe; and added, 'When?'

‘As soon as I am well enough, and everything can be arranged.’ He laughed weakly in his joy and triumph, and held out a hand. Joe grasped it, and he continued, ‘The one creature dearest in the world to your wife, next to you, is my wife that is to be.’

‘I know as much,’ said Joe.

‘And Ethel has consented to this haste,’ said John, ‘on condition that you take our wedding-day as yours.’

Joe bent his head, and, bringing up a second hand to the young lawyer’s, gripped it hard in both of his without a word.

‘That contents you?’

‘Yes.’

‘Call Ethel,’ said John, dropping back upon his pillows with a tired but happy look.

Joe obeyed.

‘It is settled, my darling,’ said John. ‘Ride away and tell Dinah.’

‘May I come with you?’ asked Joe, blushing like a schoolboy, but looking in her face with candid eyes.

‘Come,’ answered Ethel brightly, ‘and secure her consent yourself.’

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

‘LET me go first,’ said Ethel, as she and Joe drove up the avenue at Worley Hall together, ‘and make her ready for you.’ And, Joe assenting, she left him with Sir Sydney in the library whilst she ran away to find Dinah. ‘My darling,’ she cried, throwing both arms about her friend’s neck, ‘I have such news for you.’ Dinah was not eager to ask the news, but Ethel whispered to her, ‘My dear, your husband is here and is waiting to see you. No. Don’t run away yet. I have something else to tell you.’

She had yielded to John’s solicitations, and in her new-found happiness that had seemed an easy thing enough to do. But now she had to recall the fact, never very easy to forget, that she and Dinah’s son had once been affianced lovers, and not so long ago. And yet Dinah knew as well as she did how much she was indebted to her new lover; by what singular bonds of pity and gratitude she had found herself tied to him.

‘Dinah, I am going to be married.’

‘Yes, darlin’,’ said Dinah; ‘to Mr. Keen?’

‘Yes. We are going to be married directly he gets well again. And so are you.’ Dinah looked helpless at this extraordinary statement, and Ethel explained it. ‘My dear, I have seen more of your husband to-day than I ever saw of him before, and I

begin to like him and believe in him—a little. And now that I know why he has been staying away from you, I esteem his reason for it, hard as it seemed at first.' She told the reason. 'And now, Dinah,' she said gaily, 'your old sweetheart has come a-courting again.' But there the gaiety suddenly broke down, and the two women had a cry together, though they were very tender and joyful tears that fell.

Then in a little while Dinah descended to meet Joe, and waited for him in a small drawing-room looking on the garden. Ethel went to the library, and having returned with him, fled, and left the two together.

'You know why I have been waiting, Dinah?'

'Yes, Joe.'

'And you will take me back again?'

'Joe! My own husband!'

They embraced and kissed each other, and sat there talking for hours, until Sir Sydney came in and roused them. Then, the evening being fine and bright, they walked in the garden together after dinner, like lovers, with their arms stolen shyly round each other, in dusky walks where none could see them, and at night, with a tender farewell, Joe went away to the town again, but only to return next day and sit and talk the day out alone with Dinah and wander about the gardens in the evening again with an arm wound lover-like about her waist as they wandered in dusky walks unnoticed. And then again farewell for the night. A singular courtship, but full of a complete forgiveness on the one side and a complete penitence on the other, and bidding fair to lead—if ever courtship led yet—to a happy union. Sometimes these lovers talked of their unhappy son, and planned for his future, and he was the only blot upon their hopes of happiness.

'Could you bear, my dear,' asked Joe, 'to leave England and go abroad with him and me to some place where our whole story is unknown, where he would have a new chance for amendment?'

'Anywhere with you an' him, Joe,' answered Dinah. 'Anywhere.'

'I'll talk it over with him,' said Joe; 'I think it best. Here the memory of the past may weigh him down and keep him hard and sullen. And perhaps, my dear, between prosperity and our watchfulness and affection he may mend.'

'Don't be too hard upon him in your mind, Joe,' said Dinah pleadingly.

'I have no right to be hard in my thoughts on any man,' Joe answered sadly.

'He was never a bad lad,' said poor Dinah, 'till he got into

that money-lending lawyer's hands and was tempted beyond his strength.'

'Then we will go abroad together, and try for the best?'

'Yes, dearest. Anywhere with you an' him,' said Dinah, and the thing was settled.

So next day Joe sought his son and found him. Dinah's purse had contained no less than fifty pounds, and the young gentleman was once more in clover. He was living in a highly respectable hotel in private rooms, had already set up another suit of clothes, and on his father's unexpected entry to his sitting-room was seated with his heels upon the low chimney-piece with a cigar in his mouth and a sporting paper in his hands. Beholding the newcomer, he arose embarrassed, and murmured something about waiting for instructions, and not knowing what to do without them.

'I am here to give you instructions,' said his father. 'For God's sake, man, go on smoking, and don't try to hide your cigar from me. Your mother and I,' he continued in a changed tone, 'are going to the colonies, where our curious story will be unknown. We think it better that you should accompany us. I have been talking things over with your mother, and I want to treat you kindly and to be your friend. There will be no temptations in the life before you unless you make them. Try to mend, my lad: try to mend your life and your mother's heart together. She has been unhappy in both of us. Let us try together to make atonement. You shall hear no more reproaches as to your past from me so long as you behave reasonably and give no cause for new offence. And I will try to do my duty by you, and will be as kind and good a father as you will let me be. Will you come with us?'

'Yes, sir,' said young George with bent head.

'What money have you?'

'My mother gave me this,' answered George, producing his purse and spreading its contents upon the table.

'You are not happy here, are you? So near the ——?' he paused, and George's head bent lower.

'No, sir. I had rather be elsewhere.'

'Go to Southampton and await us there. When you want money write to me, not to your mother. To attempt to draw one penny from her without my knowledge is to forfeit my protection and your own prospects. And that—I hope—is my last threat to you. Shake hands. Good-bye. Keep watch upon yourself, and try to be a decent fellow henceforward. Good-bye.'

And he was gone.

'I *will* try,' cried the wretched young George, when left alone. 'I will be a decent sort of fellow.'

Joe went back to Dinah and told her all he had said and undertaken, and the quaintly tender courtship went on again. They planned, like common lovers, for their future life, and like common lovers looked forward to their wedding-day. Sometimes they went to see John Keen, and day by day they found him growing stronger. Sir Sydney pressed for the wedding to take place from his house, but Mrs. Donne was too shy to present herself there, and Daniel had no other nurse than her, and seemed likely very soon to be in want of no nurse at all. He had no memory of anything and no knowledge of what went on about him, missed nobody, sank swiftly, swiftly to his final setting, poor old earthly luminary, who had kept hearts warm in his time.

Ethel had redeemed her promise to call upon old George, and at his request had read the Bible to him; the broken and defeated old rascal taking his breakage and defeat for penitence as other people have done. He was harmless now to everybody, quite a scotched snake, and was gentle and forbearing even with Mrs. Bullus. When John was well enough to get out to him, he called with a draft of the will, and having read it, bethought him of the housekeeper.

'She has been a good servant, Mr. Bushell,' he ventured to say.

'I forgot her. I forgot her,' said old George eagerly. 'Put her down for summat handsome. Fifty pound a year payable from the estate. That's handsome, ain't it, eh? I want to do right by everybody. I'm afraid I've been a hard man in my time, Mr. Keen. I want to straighten everythin' out afore I go. Is theer anythin' else as you can think on, eh?'

John himself was weak yet, and the journey to old George's threw him back a day or two. He lived on at Bowker's cottage, and declared stoutly that he would only leave it to be married, a declaration highly approved of by the coaly William and his wife.

It used to be a curious sight, and not without its pathetic side, to see Ethel and old George together, she reading and he listening, for all the world as if he were a child again.

'Good words, bain't 'em, Miss Donne?' old George would say. 'I wish I'd ha' paid more heed to 'em when I was younger.'

He failed and broke so rapidly, and was so conscious of it, that he asked the doctor one day in Ethel's presence:

'Now you tell me straight out, an' don't you be afeard to speak, the truth, because I've made my peace with Them Above, an'

I'm ready when my time comes—How long do you gi'e me? How many days?'

'Come, come,' said the doctor; 'you mustn't talk in this way.'

'But I must talk i' this way,' old George protested. 'How many days?'

'That is in other hands than ours,' said the doctor. 'I can't say.'

'Shall I iver get off o' this here bed again alive?' The doctor was silent. 'That's enough. My dear, I should like to see my newew Joseph an' his wife an' mek my peace wi' 'em, if they'll be that good.'

'They will come if you desire it, I am sure.'

'Write a note and send a cab with it,' he answered, and almost immediately he fell asleep.

'Is he as near the end as he believes?' asked Ethel.

'I am afraid,' said the doctor, 'that it is but a question of a few hours.'

Ethel wrote the note and sent it away, and in less than two hours the cab returned bearing Joe and Dinah.

'That's them!' cried the old man, who was awakened by the sound of wheels. 'That's my newew Joseph.'

'Yes,' said Ethel, looking from the window. 'They are here.'

She went out to meet them and prepare them for the change in old George's condition. They entered softly and stood by his bedside.

'Newew Joseph,' said Uncle George. 'You can forgive a dyin' man as asks for your forgiveness?'

'We are all too much in need of one another's mercy,' said Joe gently. 'Whatever wrongs you did me, I forgive.'

'An' you, missis?' said Uncle George, looking up at Dinah.

'Oh yes, poor soul, with all my heart,' she said.

'Theer's more than you know on to forgive,' said George feebly. 'You see that theer mahogany chest o' drawers, my dear?'—addressing Ethel.

'Yes.'

'I' the left-hand little drawer you'll find a bunch o' keys.' She found them. 'The biggest on 'em opens that theer wardrobe.'

'Yes.' She opened it, and stood awaiting him.

'Do you see an old light overcoat a-hangin' up?' he demanded huskily from the bed.

'Yes,' she said again.

'Bring it to me.' She brought it—a decayed and mildewed garment of a light fine cloth, lined with a faded watered silk, and having a blotched and faded collar of the same.

'It was my nevw Joseph's coat,' he said, reaching out a feeble hand for it. 'I found it 'ears an' 'ears after he'd gone away, after you come to me, missis.' Dinah nodded to signify that she understood. 'Theer was a certificate o' your marriage in the linin', an' I found that an' I burned it, God forgi'e me! Yes, I burned it, Joseph. That was my wicked crime.'

'God forgive you for it!' said Joe.

'God forgive you for it, as I do,' said Dinah.

'That's my—last—confession,' said old George. He had been speaking with feebler and still feebler breath all through, and now it seemed to fail him. 'You do forgive me? Both of you?'

'With all my heart,' said Joe.

'And you too, missis?'

'Poor dyin' fellow-creature, yes,' cried Dinah, weeping. 'With all my heart.'

'Stay till it's all o'er wi' me,' old George besought Ethel, and she promised.

But there was not long to stay, for almost as she spoke he gave one long long sigh, and never breathed again. There was nobody to grieve greatly at his going, but the women were a good deal moved for the moment. Joe attended the funeral, and John Keen, who was by this time well enough to attend without danger, read the will in the presence of a few witnesses, who all heard it with amazement. Young George was apprised of his fortune, and came up from Southampton to see about it. And since I am in something of a hurry to be rid of young George, and have for the most part done with his adventures, I may as well anticipate a little and dismiss him here. In a certain Australian weekly journal I saw a case the other day in which a youngster was reported as having undergone his preliminary trial before the magisterial bench on a charge of forgery. And the magistrate, who behaved apparently with a long-winded dignity and had a good deal of the talking to himself, bore the name of George Bushell. George is highly respected, keeps a carriage and good horses, and is, I am told, likely enough to be married one of these early days. This is a world in which singular awards are sometimes made, and which is not governed always on the plan of the fictionist, who has it in his power to bless the good with wealth and happiness and to beat the evil—to rescue Marguerite and find a warm corner for Mephistopheles. But the way of the world is ordered otherwise, and it is not only the magnanimous, the gentle, and the good who prosper in it.

And now there rises over Wrethedale town that sun of early



summer whose happy lot it is to look on youth and beauty wedded to worth and love. A charming morning, and the birds all wild with mirth. Sir Sydney Cheston rises betimes from his bed in the little hotel and bedecks himself as gaily as if he were the bridegroom, for it is his to give the bride away, and this being his first experience in that line, and the bride and bridegroom being both special favourites of his, he is anxious to do justice to the part. John Keen is up betimes also in the next room, and Sir Sydney hears him singing, a little crow-like, for John is no great vocalist, but blyther than lark or linnet. Miss Donne and Mrs. Donne are also up betimes, and what with the plaiting of hair and putting on of apparel, and the kissing and crying which ensue at intervals, find their hands full. Joe, sitting in *his* room in the little hotel, can hear John's strident melody, and feels his heart go out to the young fellow, yet can scarce help a touch of sadness to think his own son should have lost the prize, and so well deserved to lose it. But he counts himself, all in all, the most blessed of men, the least deserving and most gently dealt with, and his heart is full. Dinah, in her own little house, makes breakfast ready for old Daniel, and feeds him, and tucks him comfortably in his great armchair, and then goes in to assist at Ethel's decoration—she too, with some sad thoughts amidst all her gladness and her thankfulness.

In due time John goes down to the church, alone, and kicks his heels about in the vestry, regarding his hat with some disfavour, and as a blot upon the day. For John's redundant locks have not yet fully grown again, and the hat to its owner's mind looks pinched and small. Sir Sydney has scouted the idea of being married in a wide-awake as altogether heathen and unheard-of, and the present article is John's first possession in the conventional stove-pipe form. In a while quietly and afoot, and with no bridal veil, comes Ethel on Sir Sydney's arm, her mother following, and Joe and Dinah bringing up the rear.

Joe and Dinah halted at the porch.

'Have you the ring, my darling?' Joe asked, and Dinah slid from her finger the wedding-ring young Joe had placed there so many years before.

They entered the church together and sat down in a dark old-fashioned pew beneath the gallery. A tender rain of tears fell from Dinah's eyes, and Joe sat silent, with bent head. They waited thus for a while, until Dinah stole her hand into his and he stooped and kissed it.

A little later came the sound of footsteps, and a voice was heard:—

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*'Joe took the old pledge of truth.'*





'I require and charge you both, as ye shall answer at the dreadful day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed—'

And as the voice began, the two in the dark old-fashioned pew knelt down together. Again the voice:—

'Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?'

And when the voice had ceased, John Keen answered with a solemn gladness in his tone 'I will,' and Joe Bushell kneeling in the darkened pew whispered 'I will.'

Then came the question to the woman, and Ethel and Dinah answered, each from her place, 'I will.'

The murmured voices came solemnly down the aisle, and found an answer at the end of the old church.

'I take thee to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I plight thee my troth.'

The tears of both fell fast as they knelt in the darkened pew together, and their arms were about each other's necks. The murmured voices sounded fainter down the aisle and found yet a fainter echo at the end.

'I take thee to my wedded husband,' and so through, with tears and tender embraces, how glad and yet regretful.

The voices sounded fuller in the aisle, and Joe took the old pledge of troth so ill-fulfilled and passed it upon Dinah's finger.

'With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, with all my worldly goods I thee endow.'

And so they knelt with tears, and silent kisses, and embraces, until the voices ceased, the last footstep died away, and the silence was broken only by their whispers.

'At last! At last!' she said,—'My own true husband! Mine again! Mine! Mine!'

'Yes,' he answered from his soul. 'Yours, Dinah. Yours for ever!'

(*The End.*)

## A Day at the Museum Reading Room.

ONE of the genuine 'sights' in the Metropolis, and the one most certain to please and astonish strangers, is the great Reading Rotunda, devised by the clever Italian director whose bust looks down from over the entrance door. The visitor suddenly introduced can hardly conceal his wonder and gratification as he gazes round at the enormous chamber, so lofty, airy, and vast; so still, and yet so crowded; so comfortable and warm, like any private library. The decoration, too, is most suitable: the books, which line it all round to a height of some forty or fifty feet, make excellent wall-toned bits of colouring; while the ribs of the huge circular roof converging to a centre, and covered with painted cloth, have by time displayed their outlines on that material, and unintentionally added a not ineffective detail. In the centre is seen the raised circular enclosure, where the officials and directors sit and carry on the business of the room, commanding a good and perfect view of all that goes on; while from it radiate the desks, where readers or writers—for there are far more of the latter than of the former—sit and work. Many are walking about; many standing at the shelves and consulting the reference volumes; many are conversing; while the attendants are hurrying to-and-fro, carrying the ordered volumes to the proper desk. There are small waggons, laden with a dozen unwieldy volumes of the 'Times,' which a truly hungry reader is trundling to his seat, yet without the least noise, for the wheels are cased with india-rubber. This rapacious individual is a type of a large class from whom the nation and readers suffer. The searching a single volume of his 'Times' might absorb a morning or mornings, but, with the true rapaciousness of a *helluo librorum*, he wishes to have all at his hand, though he cannot use them. His fellow of the same kidney will write up for a dozen or more octavos, and rear around him whole fortifications of volumes which he will never glance at—but it is a sort of ownership.

The reader's desk is almost too luxurious. Nothing more complete or thoughtfully devised could be conceived. There is a choice of three kinds of chairs: stuffed leathern, cane-bottomed, or highly polished mahogany; so the most *difficile* as to this nice matter may suit themselves. The constant student and diligent author should choose the second; they will thank me for this valuable and precious hint, given by the late Mr. Dickens, and enforced solemnly from his own experience.

The height of the desk is carefully calculated. Below, there is a place for 'stowing away' the hat; in front, to the right, the reader lets down a small padded shelf, on which he can put away his books for consultation; to the left, a book-stand comes out, ingeniously contrived to move in any direction on a swivel or axis, to rise or fall at any angle, with a rack. In the centre is an ink-stand, with a steel pen and two quills; there is also a paper-cutter, a blotting-pad, and a heavy press-weight to keep the book open. Surely this is all *de luxe*, and many a scribbling being is not nearly so well provided at home.

The ticket on which the description of the work wanted is written is of this pattern:—

Permission to use the Reading-Room will be withdrawn from any person who shall write or make marks on any part of a printed book, manuscript, or map belonging to the Museum.

Press Mark.	Name of Author, or other Heading of Work wanted.	Place.	Pa'o.	Size.
	Title.			

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Number of the Reader's Seat).

Please to restore each Volume of the Catalogue to its place, as soon as done with.

On the other side are the following directions:—

#### READERS ARE PARTICULARLY REQUIRED

1. Not to ask for more than *one work* on the same ticket.
  2. To transcribe from the Catalogues all the particulars necessary for the identification of the Work wanted.
  3. To write in a plain, clear hand, in order to avoid delay and mistakes.
  4. To indicate in the proper place on each ticket the number of the seat occupied.
  5. To bear in mind that no Books will be left at the seat indicated on the ticket unless the Reader who asks for them is there to receive them.
  6. When any cause for complaint arises, to apply at once to the Superintendent of the Reading-Room.
  7. Before leaving the Room, to return each Book, or set of Books, to an attendant at the centre counter, and obtain the corresponding ticket, the READER BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOOKS SO LONG AS THE TICKET REMAINS UNCANCELLED.
  8. To replace on the shelves of the Reading-Room, as soon as done with, such Books of Reference as they may have had occasion to remove for the purpose of consultation.
- N.B.—Readers are not, under any circumstances, to take a Book, MS., or Map out of the Reading-Room,



These slips are used profusely, and by wanton readers with the most reckless waste. The amount consumed in a day must be enormous. Numbers are wasted or torn up; many are convenient for making notes on, and thus save the expense of paper. Many readers copy out a vast number of entries from the catalogue on these slips, which they mean to use at some future period. In short, the consumption of paper by the end of a year—and each slip is on paper of fine quality and nearly the size of half a sheet of ‘note’—must be enormous, and represent a considerable sum. It more or less encourages the useless, vacant reader, who delights in filling up as many as he can. A reform might certainly be made here, analogous to that in the Money Order Office, when the little simple slips now in use were substituted for the old complicated and larger ones. A small scrap of the size of such a Post Office form, leaving out the directions, which are never read, would make everything shorter and clearer. A piece of paper three inches by two, ruled in three divisions, would serve.

Press Mark.	
Name of Book, Date, &c.	
Name of Reader.	

Further, there are little handy book-cases standing apart, filled with reference indexes to reviews and magazines—with that wonderful one to the ‘Times,’ which the industrious Samuel Palmer slaves at untiringly, working his way at double tides, backwards as well as forwards, through the old as well as through the current numbers. I have noticed this patient workman and his assistant at their drudging but useful work.

The next step is to consult the catalogue—a library in itself, whose folios are disposed on two deep shelves near the ground, and fitted into the circular enclosure or table which forms the central ring. Here is the whole alphabet, as found disposed in nearly six hundred MS. folio volumes, bound in whole purple calf, and yet being perpetually re-bound, the corners being tipped with metal to protect them against wear and tear. But these wonder-

ful volumes have a strange power of expanding, that must be the despair of the binders, save that they are well accustomed to the routine. Never was the system of guards so drawn upon; at almost every page these are found. At the close of each day one is sure to encounter assistants carrying off a number of the ponderous volumes for this revision; for by the end of each day a vast number of new titles have been written out in the neat museum round-hand, and duly lithographed on slips; and these have to be fitted in in their *proper* place, mark! that is, in their strict alphabetical hierarchy. Thus, for the new novel by Meddle there is but the one fitting place, say between Mecca and Meddlicott, which two titles, however, may be squeezed close together, and, as if in the crowded row of a pit, cannot 'move down.' A new sheet has therefore to be introduced and fitted to the guard, and the entries moved on. When the 'guards' have been filled and the volume begins to bulge, it is taken to pieces and re-bound, or perhaps divided into two. By the new system of printed entries the space taken up is far less, and the necessity for shifting is much reduced. It should have been mentioned that all the titles of the new books as they come out are duly printed in volumes, which are placed in stands for reference; and, the type being kept standing, these are used for the entries. But, indeed, catalogue arrangement is an art in itself, as can be seen from the Parliamentary report on the subject. No one can conceive the difficulties of classification, cross-references, &c. Another perplexing matter was to find a system of letters and numbers for noting each volume, that should not be exhaustible nor too cumbrous.

A careful examination of the catalogue would of itself result in many curiosities. The authors rejoicing in the name of SMITH fill three or four of the folio volumes. The '*John Smiths*' fill many bewildering pages, which you must go through before finding your own John Smith; but even here our compilers give every shred that may distinguish, and they will mark him conspicuously as a divine 'D.D.,' or even of 'Stoke Pogis,' if he have written a respectable number of volumes. Popular writers or classical fill half a volume, or innumerable pages, as the case may be. Thus with Sir Richard Steele, and particularly Boswell's Johnson, Milton. England has a couple of volumes to itself, in which we find all the kings in their order, and all that concerns each. So with France. Periodical publications, 'P. P.' in the notation, have quite a catalogue of their own. All these and more are here found gathered together to the number of some twenty volumes or so. They are ordered alphabetically according to cities—Antwerp, Berlin, Calcutta, &c.; the Antwerp magazines and

journals being again put alphabetically. To help those who know a magazine by its name but not its country, a general index in some fresh volumes is given. London, however, has a set of volumes to itself. Newspapers are not catalogued under numbers or letters, but it is enough to write the name of the paper wanted. Shakespeare, it may be conceived, has a large amount of space to himself, though, indeed, this is scarcely a mark of merit, as there are many industrious editors and bookmakers who stand this test even better. It was stated the other day in a literary journal, as evidence of claims of this description, that the works of the admirable veteran novelist, Harrison Ainsworth, 'filled forty pages of the Museum catalogue.'

There is, besides, what is known as the 'Old Museum Catalogue,' in about fifty volumes; which is formed of a printed catalogue made more than half a century ago, and supplemented by MS. entries. There is some awkwardness in this double accommodation, as some works are enrolled in one which are not in the other. The entries are in old and indifferent penmanship, squeezed in at every space and corner; but in its day, like Mercutio's wound, it 'served.' It suggests the catalogue of the fine library at a certain University, where, by a strange economy, a Bodleian catalogue thus supplemented, and with due erasures and additions, is made to do duty as the authorised list.

There is also a wonderful music catalogue, extending to some thirty or forty folio volumes, and a marvellous so-called 'catalogue' of the prints, which has now reached to four or five volumes, arranged chronologically. It is, in truth, an elaborate treatise, explaining fully the subject of every plate,—often, as in the case of Hogarth, enigmatical enough,—showing the meaning of each figure, and quoting from contemporary writers: a wonderful monument, in short, of patient industry. In addition, there are 'Publishers' Circulars' for forty or fifty years back, and two big volumes of a 'Newspaper Index.' In this land of catalogues, we of course meet those of the 'MSS.' There are some half a dozen printed volumes, and some in MS. Of these the most curious are Mr. Cole's, an old antiquary of the last century, who in beautiful handwriting, black, clear as print, and upright, made diligent 'collections,' copying every curious inscription, letter, and bit of poetry, what not. These he illustrated with rude but truly effective pen-and-ink sketches. For the whole he drew up these wonderful indexes. His eyes and his industry must have been equally valuable to him. There is even a catalogue for the Persian MSS. In short, every help is provided. The next operation is to obtain the book. Now, in the room itself, on the

shelves running within helping reach, is disposed a very fine library, of a rather unique kind, for it consists of what may be called consultation books; everything that will furnish general information on any subject—such as law, medicine, languages, science, history. For each department there are the standard works on each, all brought together; all the Histories of England—Freeman, Green, Froude, Lingard, Hume, Walpole—all the Calendars of State Papers, Parliamentary Reports, &c. So with French and German. The collection of Encyclopædias, it may be conceived, is extraordinary, for here are all the foreign as well as English, to the great ‘Dictionary of Conversation’; Peerages without number; Directories, Almanacs of all the leading countries, journals like ‘Notes and Queries’ and ‘The Gentleman’s Magazine,’ your true ‘bookmaker’s’ friends.

Having found his work, our reader fills up his ticket, leaves it in a little open basket with a number of others, whence it is presently carried off. It then goes on its travels, sometimes afar off, through vast chambers and corridors, up flights of stairs, iron and stone, perhaps for a quarter of a mile, for thus do the shelves ramble away: thence to return to the wedge-shaped enclosure in the great room, where the assistants copy the particulars into their books. When thus ‘controled,’ the ticket is placed between the leaves, the assistant in the room takes it to the reader’s desk, and brings away the ticket to the central desk, where it is deposited in a little zinc compartment alphabetically labelled. The time consumed in this process should not be more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. Formerly half an hour and longer was the time a book had to be waited for; but the real cause of any delay is the waiting its turn, as there are so many to be served. When the reader has finished with his book, and would restore it, he goes to the desk, hands in his book, and receives back his ticket. Till this receipt is given, he is held accountable. The men within then check off their entries by the books, which are once more in their possession. Thus much for the catalogue.

The museum reader is a special type. Certainly three-fourths are genuine workers—bookmakers, copyists. One is amazed at the hodman-like patience and diligence shown—especially in the wearisome duty of collating, carried on with an unflinching conscientiousness by some wizened Dryasdust, who comes week after week, and goes through the great folio line by line. There are fair ‘damozels,’ who work like any copying-clerks, and whose appearance is antagonistic to their drudgery. They have a volume of old letters before them, which they copy out fair for some literary man who has cash and position. Then there are families

of copyists—husband, wife, and daughter. As anyone engaged in literary work well knows, that copying—on any serious scale—is a costly business, though it is reasonable for the executant; while the writing is beautifully neat and clear, it spreads out to an alarming extent. Copying, indeed, does not pay, save in the case of MSS. otherwise not procurable. The literary man even at his desk, with text-book from which he is quoting, though it be a passage of only a dozen lines, will find it far cheaper to sacrifice the printed book, cut out the bit and paste it in, than to spend a quarter of an hour writing it out. I have known many literary men whose books are cut up in this fashion. The wise and knowing take care to purchase some damaged copy for the special purpose. Many, however, hold it profane to cut and slash a book in this style—holding that you are taking its life—there being but a certain number of that edition in the world.

Every year the crowd of readers increases, while the Reading Room, in spite of rearrangement, remains pretty much the same after twenty years or so. When all the scholars of the new schools and universities are in full work, the pressure will become serious. Yet, there never can be found any real remedy; and no room, of whatever size, could be found sufficient to hold the ‘readers of the nation.’ The theory, it seems to me, is a false one, that every reader in the kingdom is entitled to find luxurious accommodation, attendance, pen and ink, with books which he wears out in the reading as though they were his own. The utmost the State can do is to entertain the eye. That causes no wear and tear, and needs little accommodation. Pictures, museums, prints, statues, are all legitimate. This is manageable, and may be seen by thousands. But to supply servants to fetch and carry for hundreds, and to wait on them, hunt up for them, aid them in their researches, bind books for them—all this service, in the case of thousands of persons, must soon break down. We might as well have State workshops. The theory is therefore an unsound one; and if carried out, it is at least the right of the nation to limit it as it pleases.

It may choose to confer the favour on those who have some claim to it, and, instead of a Reading Room, make it a ‘Student’s Room,’—that is, for those who have work or business to do: a matter that should be regularly guaranteed. Even in their case, there should be a limit to the large number of volumes that rapacity requires to have around it. This should not be tolerated, save for special cause shown. It might be urged that all novel and poetry-readers might content themselves with what is found on the shelves of the room; but this would not serve the demand, there

being only one or two copies kept. The reform should extend to the limitation of persons as well as to that of the use of books. As regards the latter, the serious objection lies in the physical exertion necessary in bringing great volumes, and collections of great volumes, to the reader's desk. The idea, indeed, is that the reader should go to the books, and not the books go to him; and the fact that great folios have to be borne on carriages many hundred yards away, and brought back again, must add seriously to the wear and tear. The first principle, therefore, is to limit this transport. As already pointed out, it seems ridiculous to find a small waggon laden with a dozen volumes of the 'Times' rolling on its way to a reader's desk, all for the benefit of some attorney's clerk who is looking for a birth, death, or marriage. It is clear that the time and physical labour involved in this process is not what the nation should pay for. Here is the true principle—for all newspapers, magazines, reviews, and 'P. P.' generally, there should be one great room, to which those who wish to consult such works should be admitted, and there help themselves. It is astonishing what an amount of labour and attendance this would at once abridge. This, with the reform as to the number of books called for, would lighten the labours of the attendants to an extraordinary degree. I fancy much aid could be gained by a development of the Consultation Library actually in the room. This could be vastly extended by taking in additional shelves, abolishing many of the technical works on medicine and such subjects, and adding others on general literature.

There are a few desks set apart, like compartments in a railway train, 'for ladies only,' and one of the standing jests of the place—perfectly supported, too, by experience—is, that these are left solitary and untenanted. There are some curious contrasts; some ancient shrivelled dame, imprinting delicate pot-hooks and hangers on official paper, while a fair and fresh young creature is seen grappling earnestly and laboriously with some mouldy and illegible MS. There are strange old ladies to be seen, somewhat shrunk and withered, for whom the place seems to have an attraction that will be strong even to death. A more piteous sight still is the decayed 'hack,'—ill-fed, ill-kept, in a state of decay, and who has some little 'job' with which to 'keep body and soul together.'

Now, I believe, books are seldom stolen; indeed, a Museum book is so ingeniously stamped on the title-page and on certain pages that it becomes worthless for other purposes, and cannot be offered for sale without certain detection. Every print in every volume is thus stamped—it may be conceived what a labour this

must be, in these days of copious illustrations. Without this precaution, they would to a certainty be cut out.

The work of all this machinery is helped by the unwearied, never-flagging, never-failing courtesy of the officials—notably of Mr. R. Garnett, and his brethren—who aid with their knowledge the anxious, troublesome, and often unreasonable inquirers. There is a class of querulous beings who delight in convicting the establishment of deficiencies. Their joy is to discover that some book ‘is not in the library,’ or, better still, ‘not to be found, or misdescribed, in the catalogue.’ They go triumphantly to the chief official with their mare’s-nest, and wait calmly while he, with patience and good humour, sends for the proper volume, and, running his finger down the entries, at last points to it, duly registered in its proper place. There is sometimes show of plausibility in the complaint, or in the positive declarations of the claimant ‘that he has had the book in his hand,’ that ‘it is in every other library;’ and the chiefs grow a little nervous. A long search has to be made: assistants are sent on exploring expeditions in many directions, and at last it is discovered that there is no such work, or that it is by another author or on another subject, and that the careless inquirer is, as usual, wrong.

From a long experience, it may be asserted that in almost every instance the presumptuous fault-finder is himself in fault. A common specimen of carelessness is presented in the filling-up of forms for works that are actually ‘in the room,’ only a few yards away from the writer’s desk. Sometimes, indeed, a book may have been put back out of its place, or a pamphlet of a few leaves, bound up with a score of others in a volume—the volume itself one of many scores—may have been overlooked or wrongly described. But, after due search and some delay, it is to a certainty recovered and placed before the impatient student, who glances at it carelessly, and finds it was not so important now that it is found. ‘So you see, sir,’ said, on an occasion of the kind, Dr. Johnson, ‘when it was lost, it was of immense consequence; and when found, it was no matter at all.’

Such is the best specimen in the world of ‘Reading made easy’; by every kind of convenience and unbounded courtesy extended with prodigality even to the working literary man, as no one so well as the present writer can testify.

PERCY FITZGERALD.

## Love and Greck.

### CHAPTER I.

#### PLANS.

MR. AND MRS. DALRYMPLE were in the middle of a discussion on the respective merits of Switzerland and Italy with a view to their annual holiday, when the postman arrived. Amongst other letters there was one the contents of which caused Mr. Dalrymple to exclaim :

‘I have it!—we must go to Scotland.’

‘My dear John, what makes you think of that?’

‘Poor old David has been out fishing, and has managed to stumble and break his arm. He seems in very low spirits, as he cannot get on with his work. It will only be kindness to go to him, and Scotland is very beautiful, my dear Emily, though it is not quite so far off as Switzerland.’

Mrs. Dalrymple was quite silent, which was such an unusual phenomenon in his partner in life that John Dalrymple began to be alarmed. Presently she said :

‘John, have you noticed how pale and thin Amy Summers has been looking lately?’

‘No wonder; all work and no play would make any girl dull. She does not lead a natural life.’

‘Well, John, I was thinking that it would be such a capital plan if we were to take Amy with us. She would be a delightful companion for me, and—and it would do her a world of good.’

Now, this was a very kind thought on the part of Mrs. Dalrymple, and did not at all account for the roar of laughter in which her husband presently indulged.

‘Soh!—Emily, my dear, you are at it again, are you?’

‘At it!—what do you mean?’

‘Mean? I mean that you are trying to make me enter into a conspiracy against the freedom and peace of mind of that most incorrigible bachelor, David Dalrymple, my brother, and of that charming but most coy and determined spinster, Amy Summers, of this parish. Do not protest, I know your tricks and your manners. Well, Emily,’ he said more seriously, ‘for once I wish heartily you may succeed.’

‘Then, you agree to be my accomplice!’

‘Nay, nay,’ he answered, holding up his hands deprecatingly.



‘I leave it all to you. I am too full of the milk of human kindness to conspire against the peace of any man or maid.’

‘At all events, you do not object to my plan of taking Amy with us?’

‘By no means; I think it is a very good idea of yours. Did you not say she was coming here this evening?—you can settle it at once. Oh! little does my lonely brother think,’ said he in tragic tones, ‘what awful fate is being prepared for him! I know him, though, better than you do, Emily, and I warn you it is no easy task you have set yourself. I wish you joy. Good morning. I leave you to weave your web.’

Amy Summers was at this time five-and-twenty. In her childhood and girlhood she had been the delight and companion of her father, whom she loved with her whole heart.

Mr. Summers had been educated for the church, but had not taken orders because of conscientious scruples about the Thirty-nine Articles. Having inherited a few thousand pounds, he determined to live quietly on the income thus provided for him, and to eke it out by occasional literary labours. His wife, whom he had married when very young, was what is generally called a sensible woman; for she never allowed her thoughts to stray into regions in which servants’ characters and cookery-books ceased to be objects of interest.

Amy was an only child, and Mr. Summers soon found out that she was possessed of unusual abilities. He had taken the greatest interest in developing her mind, and had made her so proficient in Greek and Latin that she could thoroughly enjoy the literature of both languages. His daughter had reached her twentieth year, and was becoming every day less his pupil and more his friend and fellow-student, when the loss of a great part of his money, owing to an unfortunate speculation, so preyed upon his mind, that he became seriously ill and shortly afterwards succumbed to an internal malady, the existence of which had been unsuspected by any but himself.

The effect upon Amy was terrible. Life seemed for many months absolutely barren and joyless. Her father had not been intentionally selfish, for he had not foreseen that his having allowed her to concentrate all her affection on him would result in years of suffering and loneliness.

Her graceful figure, wavy golden hair, and deep-set dark-grey eyes, together with the sweet smile which sometimes brightened her face, might, indeed, have gained her many admirers; but her education had unfitted her for enjoying the ordinary common-

places of society; and, having no brothers, she had no opportunity of becoming interested either in the more serious aspirations or in the natural and spirit-stirring amusements of the young men of her acquaintance: to her they seemed to have only silly compliments and stale jokes at their command.

They, for their part, were generally repelled by the cold reserve of her demeanour, and had no idea of the underlying tenderness and playfulness of her disposition.

One bright-faced, dark-eyed youth there was, indeed, who had been a constant visitor at their house. He was an ambitious student, and came to Mr. Summers both for books and guidance. Amy and he had had many interesting talks together. When he left for college, her image mingled in all his dreams of the future. She was sorry when he went away, for she liked him, and the liking might have grown into love. But it was not to be. Ill-health compelled him to go abroad: he never returned to England, and never saw Amy again.

When Amy's first passionate grief for her father was subdued, she fell back on study, and tried to imitate the Stoics of old. There had never been much sympathy between Mrs. Summers and her daughter, and when, two years afterwards, the former married again, Amy felt that she must seek a home elsewhere; so she went to help a cousin of her father's who had a large school in one of the southern counties. The occupation was not uncongenial to her, and she decided to go on with it.

An earnest and successful worker is always sure of a certain amount of happiness; but we cannot wonder if, possessed as she was of the power of loving deeply, Amy should sometimes have felt that there was a great want in her life. She was conscious that the strongest feelings of her nature were lying unused except in the kind of spirit-worship which she paid to the memory of her father. Her happiest hours were spent in reading the books which she had learnt to enjoy with him; for then sometimes she could almost believe that he was still with her. Her peculiar favourites were the three grand old Greek tragedians. Their stern views of life, and the grim sadness of some of the stories which they chose as subjects, had a great attraction for her.

The visits which Amy paid to Mrs. Dalrymple constituted the only interruption to her round of studies. Their daughter had been her favourite pupil, and when Helen married and went to India with her husband it had been a comfort to the parents to have Amy with them sometimes. The visits had been very pleasant to her, and she was glad when it was time to go that after-

noon ; but she had no idea of the surprise which was in store for her.

As soon as she had taken off her hat and jacket and was seated in the drawing-room with Mrs. Dalrymple, the latter said :

‘Amy, what do you think?—John and I have decided on going to Scotland this summer.’

‘Why! Mrs. Dalrymple, that will be delightful. Scotland is about the only country that I really long to see.’

‘How fortunate! you can have your desire at once, for we are most anxious that you should accompany us.’

‘Mrs. Dalrymple!’ exclaimed Amy in astonishment.

‘Yes, my dear, and you must not be overcome with gratitude, for John and I know what we are about, and we have taken care to choose the most amiable travelling companion we could think of, and we mean to have a delightful time together.’

It was not Amy’s way to be very much excited about anything now; but there was an unusual flush on her cheeks this evening, and her eyes were brighter than they had been for many a day.

When Mr. Dalrymple came in, he exclaimed :

‘Well, Amy, if the thought of a change of air makes you look so bright, what will become of you when you really see “bonnie Scotland”?’

‘It is extremely kind of you both to think of taking me with you,’ said Amy.

‘Has Emily told you what led us to make up our minds to go there?’

At this speech, Mrs. Dalrymple did not look at all pleased, for she was afraid that her husband was going to mar her plans, and put one of the victims on guard. She said at once :

‘We had so much to say, that I had no time to explain.’

Turning to Amy she continued :

‘Mr. David Dalrymple, my husband’s brother, has had the misfortune to break his arm in some remote but very lovely village in Scotland ; and we are going to see that these northern savages do not take advantage of him in his maimed condition.’

‘Is your brother like you?’ asked Amy, quite unconscious that her innocent question was a source of much quiet amusement to John Dalrymple.

‘Well,—no. He is taller and not so fat ; he has iron-grey hair, nicely waved (at least, so the ladies say), and a finely developed nose. Then, he is tremendously clever, and is always occupied in some antediluvian literary work. He is among the

Hebrews now, I think. David is a much better fellow than I am, except for two things—he is an incurable woman-hater and confidently obstinate. I believe that fellow would sooner let his inside be eaten out like that young Spartan fool, than give up any of his pig-headed opinions. Some people call it pride; I call it obstinacy.’

‘He has some reason for hating women, though,’ said Mrs. Dalrymple, ‘for he was jilted most shamefully when he was a young man. He vowed that he would never ask another woman to marry him, and he has kept his word so far.’

‘And he’ll keep it to the end, the stupid blockhead that he is!’ said John. ‘If he had married some pretty heiress within six months, it would have been a much better way of punishing the false young woman. But, there!—it makes me indignant whenever I think of it. Let us change the subject. When do your holidays begin, Amy?’

‘At the end of this month.’

‘Good. We shall start early in August—the very best time for going to Scotland. While we are talking about it—be sure you ladies take plenty of wraps with you; for Scotland is a fickle dame to deal with. She treats you to hot and cold fits with no consideration for delicate constitutions.’

After having spent a pleasant evening with her friends, Amy went back to dream of hills and heather.

## CHAPTER II.

### DRUMNADROCHIT.

ON August 1, Mr. and Mrs. Dalrymple and Amy started for Glasgow, whence they were to proceed by the Caledonian Canal to Drumnadrochit.

It was a glorious evening as the steamer turned into the beautiful little bay which was their destination, and landed them at the Temple Pier—a landing-place with very different surroundings from those of its namesake in London. There was but one small dwelling in sight, and Amy laughingly said that they would have to lodge in the ruined castle at the entrance of the bay.

Since the morning of the preceding day they had been passing through ever-varying scenes of beauty; but though they had seen much that was wilder, grander, more solitary, and more impressive, they had seen nothing more lovely than this little paradise, which seemed to invite weary mortals to leave all cares behind, and rest with Nature.

Several of the passengers, with whom they had become acquainted on the journey, had wondered much that they should think of going to such a little-known, out-of-the-way place, when Inverness was only fifteen miles farther on; but they began to think now that even for people who were neither artists nor anglers Drumnadrochit might be a charming place in which to spend a summer holiday. Had it rained, doubtless their feelings would have been different.

A grand scramble for bags and rugs—a bump against the pier—many hasty ‘good-byes’—then they jump ashore, and the steamer is off again, growing rapidly smaller as they wave their handkerchiefs to their quickly made friends.

They turn, and find a waggonette waiting to convey them to the inn.

As they drive there, Mr. Dalrymple remarks that David has shown good taste in his selection of a hermitage.

‘By Jove, I should not mind doing the hermit myself for a time, amid such surroundings.’

‘In the summer time,’ said Mrs. Dalrymple quietly.

‘Don’t damp my fervour, Emily. I should have been spouting poetry in a minute, if you had only let me be. Instead of which, here I am wondering what sort of dinner they will give us at the inn. How is it with you, Amy? Are you hungry, or has such a feast of beauty deprived you of all wish for the ordinary food of mortals?’

‘At the risk of seeming unpardonably prosaic, Mr. Dalrymple, I must confess to being decidedly hungry. But, do you know, it seems to me that I like this better than all that we have seen to-day. It is a place to be loved. I am very glad we are to stay here.’

‘Well, I hope we shall not be disenchanted,’ said Mrs. Dalrymple. ‘Our first impressions are so favourable, that I fear disappointment may await us.’

‘Now it is your turn, Amy, to have the wet blanket applied to your enthusiasm. Never mind, let us console each other. We, whose souls are full of poetry, must combine to quell this—but here we are at Drumnadrochit Inn. It is homely enough; let us hope it is comfortable.’

The landlady, a pleasant-looking woman, who seemed happy in the consciousness of always giving satisfaction, received them quietly, and took them to the rooms which had been prepared for them. They were very plainly furnished, but clean and inviting enough: and then, the view would have made up for much.

David Dalrymple was out when they arrived, for they had not

told him of their intended visit; but had written in Amy's name from Glasgow to secure rooms.

Amy had several times felt inclined to pity this poor man, who had sought out what he considered a remote and inaccessible solitude, and whose dream of peace was to be so rudely shattered. She was a little curious, however, to see how he would take their invasion.

He had ordered dinner at seven o'clock, so it was agreed that the landlady was to serve up as good a dinner as she could at such short notice, for the whole party.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE HERMIT AT BAY.

WHILE the ladies unpacked their things and arranged their toilet, Mr. Dalrymple set out with his pipe in the direction indicated by the landlady as that in which he was most likely to meet his brother.

He would have enjoyed letting the latter enter and confront the Philistines without any preparation; but Mrs. Dalrymple was afraid that David might in his first surprise say something that would hurt Amy's feelings, and perhaps have a fatal effect on her plans. So poor John was sent forth to break the ice, a task which he did not altogether relish.

He started with the intention of walking a long way; but, having taken a turning to the left at a very short distance from the inn, he found himself on a bridge with a low stone parapet, which was such an inviting resting-place whence to survey the surrounding hills, that he got no farther that afternoon. He sat there ruminating and throwing stones into the chattering stream beneath.

Meanwhile David Dalrymple, who had not taken that turning to the left, was slowly walking back to dinner, grumbling much inwardly at the delay in his work owing to his unfortunate accident.

As he approached the inn, Amy came out and went across the road to explore a little garden and summer-house overgrown with honeysuckle, which she had seen from her window.

'Confound it all,' said David to himself, 'this is too bad. I thought this place at least was safe from women. What on earth can a woman want here? I did think that I had found one place on earth where a man could have a little peace. Well, I suppose I shall have to move on. After all, it is not of so much consequence, as I cannot work.' He really seemed as if he meant to start at once, without even taking his things with him; but just

then a maid-servant came out and told him that a gentleman had been inquiring for him, and that the mistress had sent him towards the falls. Glad to avoid entering the house, David turned, wondering much who the gentleman might be.

When John Dalrymple heard a footstep approaching, he ceased his pastime of adding stones to the already stony brooklet, and, turning, saw his brother with his left arm in a sling.

‘What in the world has brought you here?’ was David’s astonished salutation.

‘Why, you, of course, old fellow. How is the arm?’

‘It gives me a good deal of trouble: but I think it will be all right in time. It has been a confounded nuisance to me, though. But, I say, John, you don’t mean to tell me that you have come all this way to see me, because I broke my arm?’

‘Well, you know, I suppose if you had chosen to break it in the Black Country or in some other unpleasant place, my brotherly affection might have satisfied itself by writing to you; but one must travel somewhere in the summer, you know, so I just thought I’d kill two birds with one stone.’

‘But what have you done with your wife?’

‘Oh, she is here too. By-the-by, did you not come from the inn just now? It is a wonder you did not see her.’

‘I saw a young lady,’ said David, in a voice which plainly indicated that the sight was not a welcome one.

‘That must have been Miss Summers, a young friend of my wife’s.’

The murder was out, and fortune had helped John so far, for it had come so naturally that it was impossible for David to say anything unpleasant without seeming ungrateful. He certainly did not seem overjoyed, but John took no notice, and, looking at his watch, said:—

‘Ten minutes to seven—we must go in. What sort of cooking does that nice-looking landlady provide? eh, David?’

‘Very good of its kind,’ said David crustily.

‘How long do you think of remaining here?’ asked John, still ignoring the evident discontent of his younger brother.

‘It will depend upon circumstances,’ said David, struggling hard with his inclination to say:

‘Hang it all, John, it’s very good of you to come and see me, but I had rather you’d stop away if you must bring a train of womankind with you.’

Fortunately, just then they got to the inn and went to their rooms. Doubtless David consoled himself with many expressions that were highly improper, but we shall not intrude upon his privacy.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A STEP IN ADVANCE.

AMY found the summer-house so delightful a retreat that she was late for dinner, and did not hear Mrs. Dalrymple ask her brother-in-law if they could not help him with his work; nor his somewhat ungracious rejoinder that ladies were not likely to know much of Greek, and that at his best John had always been a dunce at it. In the latter part John at once acquiesced, and added that he thought he could beat the claimant at forgetting.

At the same time he glanced at his wife with a look of half-comic despair, which meant: 'Your first step has not been very successful.'

But on Mrs. Dalrymple's face there was a quiet smile which seemed to say: 'Genius can wait.'

Amy came in apologising, and after the ceremony of introduction had been gone through, John said:

'But why is it that you are so hurried over this work, David? In the kind of thing that you are generally doing, a year more or less makes little difference.'

'Yes, but this happens to be an article for one of the autumn quarterlies, and must be finished in proper time.'

'What is the subject?'

'"The Drama, Ancient and Modern." I am particularly anxious to work it out well, as it is a hobby of mine that the form of the old Greek drama, with its two or three chief personages and magnificent choruses, is much better fitted for the representation of tragedy than the form adopted by more modern dramatists.'

Amy pricked up her ears at this, and began to think that Mr. David Dalrymple's researches in the realms of literature might not be of so dryasdust a nature as his brother had made her believe; but she refrained from saying anything, having resolved to efface herself, so as not to terrify this modern hermit.

He continued to hold forth for a little on his favourite topic, and interested her greatly; but broke off suddenly, saying:

'You were foolish to start me on this subject. Tell me about your journey.'

There followed a good deal of the usual talk about the scenery through which they had passed, and the various little adventures that had befallen them by the way.

After dinner, when the gentlemen had smoked their cigars, they joined the ladies in a room which David had turned into a



sort of study. He sat down to write, while John read the papers, Mrs. Dalrymple went on with a novel, and Amy mended some gloves which had not taken kindly to travelling.

Presently there seemed to be a good deal of fumbling and muttering going on at David's corner of the room. It continued for some time, and then he got up, saying bitterly, 'This is what puts me out so terribly:—I want a quotation; I know half of it, but cannot remember exactly in what part of the play it is: and how am I to look for things with one hand?'

John came over and took up the book, saying:

'Spout a bit, old fellow, and I'll do my best.'

David began to recite what happened to be a favourite passage of Amy's. She had been watching him for some time silently, and now said: 'I know where that is; let me find it.'

It would have been amusing enough for any bystander to have seen the result of these simple words. To begin with, all three stared at her with open-eyed astonishment; then the expression changed gradually on each face. Pleasure became mingled with the surprise on David's, as Amy took the book and quietly found the place. Intense amusement gradually became John's dominant expression, while Mrs. Dalrymple's was one of quiet triumph, which deepened into something almost sublime as her husband whispered to her: 'You never told me of this trump card!' and she motioned to him to look at David and Amy.

The former had taken his place again at the writing-table, and Amy was bending over it arranging the book so that the place should not be lost, while making some remark which showed David that she was a fellow-student not to be despised. They went on talking for some time, and David was perfectly genial and natural, for he forgot the woman in the scholar.

Presently Amy went back to her seat and continued her mending, but she was not left long in peace.

'Miss Summers, I fear I must appeal to you again, if you would be so kind.'

In a moment Amy had the book in her hand, and was looking at him with sympathy and interest.

That evening a great deal of work was got through, and David seemed quite blithe, as he said: 'You have given me back my other hand, Miss Summers, but I fear that it has been a sad bore to you.'

'By no means. Make as much use of me as you please. It is work that I enjoy greatly.'

And so, before they retired to rest, it was agreed that until the

article was finished, Amy should continue to act as his aide-de-camp.

‘I shall try not to make you more a prisoner than is absolutely necessary, Miss Summers; for you must enjoy the glorious weather. An hour in the morning and an hour or two in the evening will do beautifully. Good-night. I hope you will rest well after your journey and your labours.’

Mr. and Mrs. Dalrymple indulged in sundry curtain confidences that night, and John warned his wife not to be too sanguine. ‘I tell you David is as obstinate as a mule—ay, as a hundred mules.’

## CHAPTER V.

### THE IDLE DAY.

For a fortnight all things went smoothly, and it seemed as though Amy had come north for no other purpose than to assist David, so naturally did everyone take to the arrangement. During the second week there was a great deal of rain; but the weather cleared again at the end of that time, and on a glorious Thursday morning Mrs. Dalrymple said at breakfast that Amy and she were longing to go again to the Falls of Dhivach, and that she had resolved that David must spare his lady-help for one morning, as they meant to take their books and lunch and spend a whole delightful day out of doors.

David felt a little inclined to protest, but he only said:

‘If Miss Summers wishes to go, of course I must get on without her.’

Mrs. Dalrymple was evidently quite determined to have her way, so Amy agreed that it would be very pleasant to have a whole holiday.

By-and-by they started, and David began to work, but somehow nothing went well, and, do as he would, there was a constant feeling within him that for him also it would be very pleasant to have a whole holiday. Then he began to wonder how far they had got on the way to the Falls. One o’clock came, and he had done nothing.

‘Confound it all! it’s no use—I cannot work. She is not here,’ said he, and then he stopped and suddenly burst into a strange laugh. ‘*She is not here!*’ repeated he slowly and ironically. ‘Well, upon my word this is a strange state of affairs.’

He began to walk rapidly up and down the room—then he gazed out of the window, and he could see in the distance the beautiful woods of pine and birch which clothed the hill where Amy was.

There came over his face a curious, wistful expression, and half unconsciously he soon found himself on the way to join the holiday-makers. He began by going slowly, but the thoughts that rose within him drove him faster and faster up the winding path which led to the Falls. He did not even stop as usual on the bridge to mark the rich brown of the water which made such a wonderful contrast with the green surroundings and the white foam of the eddies. As he came towards the top, however, he began to think how absurdly he was acting, and determined to go home again. But he was very near a sort of rough summer-house that overlooked the little valley in which lay Drumnadrochit, and also commanded a view of Loch Ness and the hills on the other side; so he made up his mind to rest there for a short time, and then go down without trying to find the others.

It so happened that Amy had grown tired of reading and had found her way to this summer-house to enjoy the view in solitude. She was thinking of him, and wondering if he missed her, when David suddenly appeared at the opening. He came in, sat down beside her, and said:

‘I have missed you dreadfully.’

Now, these words might only mean that he had not been able to find his quotations without her; but they were said in a low tone with a sort of tremor in it, and accompanied by a look which made Amy’s heart stand still. She felt strangely glad to see him, but her only words were—‘Did you?’

Then there was silence for a few minutes, but it was an intensely eloquent silence, during which their spirits seemed to come very near to one another. There came to both the consciousness that they belonged to each other.

In the distance was heard the rush of the Falls; before them waved the graceful birch-trees; afar glistened the waters of Loch Ness. For one moment Amy felt perfectly happy. As David gazed at her downeast face, a great longing came over him to take her in his arms. So terrible did the temptation become, that he suddenly started to his feet and said in a gruff voice:

‘Where are the others? Why did you leave them?’

Amy rose wonderingly, but even then she felt that for the future she would rather hear his roughest tones than the sweetest whispers from any other voice.

In silence they walked to the place where Mr. and Mrs. Dalrymple were encamped on shawls. As soon as they came near, David called out with apparent joviality:

'You see, I have not let you get all the holiday-making. Why should not I have my share?'

'I am delighted to see you so sensible. Have you had lunch? No. Well, come on; there's something left.'

David's behaviour all that afternoon was very strange, and completely puzzled Amy. He had alternate fits of noisy mirth and perfect silence. During the latter his face sometimes assumed an unusually grave expression.

His brother could not understand him, and occasionally glanced at Amy to see if there was anything in her appearance to account for it.

There was nothing special to be noticed in Amy, however, except that she looked particularly well and pretty. But that was ascribed both by herself and others to the beneficial effects of mountain breezes. Much of it was really due to the new interest which life was beginning to have for her, and of which to-day, for the first time, she was half-conscious.

It was this, far more than the change of air, that had given the healthful glow to her cheek and the clearness to her soft, grey eyes.

She sometimes watched David curiously, sometimes gazed far away with a dreamy tenderness in her eyes, and a smile hovering about her lips, that made one forget how firm they could be.

It was very pleasant idling there on that lovely day; but the shades of evening began to close in, and Mr. Dalrymple had reluctantly to give the signal for preparing to go homewards.

So peaceful were the twilight sounds, so soothing was the rustling of the leaves as they passed through the beautiful woods, that no one felt inclined to break the silence. As they neared the little inn, even the faint rustling of the leaves seemed to have ceased; and the silence would have been perfect but for the distant murmur of the stream and the occasional call of a sleepy bird to its wandering mate.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE STRUGGLE BEGINS.

THERE was not very much time for work that evening, but David seemed determined to make the most of it. He had never before been so intent upon it. There was no breaking off to talk about something else: it was serious business.

When it was time for Amy to go, he said, with an almost stern politeness:

'Forgive me if I am trying your patience too severely, but I am beginning to be very anxious about this article, and should like to finish it soon.'

Amy could not understand the sudden change, but assured him that he had not nearly come to the end of her powers of endurance.

Next day his manner was the same, and so it continued till the end of the following week, when the work was nearly finished. True, sometimes, when Amy had happened to raise her eyes suddenly, she had met his fixed upon her with an expression in them that did not seem to accord with his stern business-like way of treating her. Once there had been such a look of misery in his whole face, that she almost asked him what was troubling him; but before she had time to follow this impulse, he had resumed his writing, and her courage failed her.

He had been apparently out of sorts ever since that happy yet fatal Thursday. His appetite seemed to have left him, and he was so irritable with John that the latter said jokingly:

'I'll never recommend a holiday to David again. It does not seem to agree with him.'

When this state of affairs had been going on for a week, Mrs. Dalrymple confided her opinion to her husband—that he need not be anxious, as David was only desperately in love, and with the remedy at hand, the illness need not be mortal; 'for,' she said, 'I have been watching Amy, and am sure she is not indifferent.'

John shook his head ominously, and said:

'If that be true, now comes the tug of war. They say, love is all-powerful. I shall believe it if it overcomes David. No wonder he looks ill, poor fellow. If only some one would cast out the devil in him, how happy he might be in such a paradise with such an Eve; for Emily, my dear, my own opinion is that Amy is becoming out and out beautiful. Now, don't be jealous,' said John, as he embraced his wife like a dutiful husband.

On the following Tuesday evening the article was finished, and nothing remained to be done but to verify one of the earlier quotations. When Amy had found the place and was putting the book before David, as she had done on the first evening, his feelings overpowered him. They were alone, and his self-control gave way. He seized her hand and pressed it passionately to his lips. Then, releasing her, he rose and said in a low voice:

'Forgive me, Miss Summers, I could not help it,' and went hastily out of the room, leaving Amy in greater bewilderment than ever.

In a kind of dazed way she put his papers in order, and then

went upstairs. As she passed Mrs. Dalrymple's room the door was not quite shut, and she heard John Dalrymple say :

'I believe you are right, Emily. He loves her, but—I'd almost bet my head he'll never propose.'

That was all Amy heard ; but it was enough. She understood now the reason for his strange treatment of her. It had caused her a good deal of unpleasant thought ; for she could not forget the tone in which he had said the simple words, 'I missed you dreadfully,' on that Thursday afternoon. Yet, as the days went on, and his cold, stern manner continued, doubt had entered into her heart. She began to feel ashamed of having ever thought that he meant what they had seemed to convey to her.

At the same time, she could not help thinking about him ; and now, the first effect of these words heard by accident was to fill her heart with joy. For, did they not tell her that others thought *he* loved her. It was some time before she cared to go further than that, but as she untwisted her golden hair she stopped suddenly—the smile died away, and a grave expression came into her face.

The thought was this : If he really loved her, a foolish vow would never stand in his way. Then she remembered all that John had said about his brother's obstinacy. But surely love can conquer that, and then she began to wonder how much she could do for David.

By-and-by she said to herself : 'How long have I known him ? Scarcely four weeks ! I must be mad !' Yet it seemed to her as though she had known him always, and had always been a part of his existence.

Before Amy fell asleep, there was a smile upon her face ; so we must suppose that her thoughts had gone back to the pleasant part of the speech she had overheard.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE.

NEXT day, as there was no work to be done, it was proposed that they should take the ten-mile drive to the end of Glen Urquhart, put up the horses, and spend some time in the neighbourhood, which was said to be of surpassing beauty. The waggonette was accordingly ordered for twelve o'clock.

David had looked ill and miserable in the morning, and refused to join them in their drive. When they proposed to put it off, so that he might be able to accompany them, he seemed so unnecessarily angry, that they decided to leave him, thinking that perhaps solitude was what he wanted.

Amy was longing to comfort him, and yet she felt angry with him too, for he did not even look at her.

When they had started, she tried to rouse herself to take an interest in the sudden changes from richly wooded hills to barren heath, and to be a lively companion ; but it was not easy, and the effort was not very successful.

Her thoughts would go back to David, and his face would come before her with its saddest expression and the wistful look in the eyes, that made her heart ache. She had a wild longing to jump out and get back to him, and then a thought suddenly came into her head, which made the colour rise to her cheeks and her heart beat faster. What was it? She was ashamed to look it in the face, and so she suddenly began to be very talkative ; but the fit of seeming gaiety did not last long.

As they drove home again after the horses had rested, the thought came back to her. This time it made her so pale that Mrs. Dalrymple wrapped her up in shawls, thinking she had caught a chill.

When they reached the inn it was six o'clock. The landlady, who was at the door, said :

‘ If you please, sir, Mr. David has gone to Inverness by the five-o'clock boat. He asked me to give you this letter.’

When Amy heard this it seemed as if a cold hand had seized her heart. It was all that she could do to keep from falling. Mrs. Dalrymple noticed it, and for one moment her confidence in her own triumphant genius failed her, and a fear came over her that she had caused some terrible mischief.

But the letter gave a simple enough explanation of his going.

For some days his arm had been giving him great pain, and he had thought it best to go to Inverness, now that his pressing work was over, and have it seen to. He said nothing about when he meant to return ; but asked them all to excuse the manner of his leaving.

This, to a certain extent, satisfied Mr. and Mrs. Dalrymple ; but Amy, thinking of the scene of the preceding evening, and of all his behaviour towards her, became at once convinced that he never meant to come back. It was very terrible to her ; she tried hard, however, to hide her trouble. Fortunately, the long drive gave her an excuse for feeling fatigued, and she went early to bed — but not to sleep.

Sometimes she thought : ‘ How foolish I am ! of course he will come back.’ At others she was perfectly certain that he never meant to see her again.

If that were so, Amy ought to have felt very angry with him ;

she could not feel anything but sorrow, for she was sure he loved her; and, if so, he too must be suffering. She was conscious of an absurd wish to find him and console him for trouble which was all of his own making.

She was not to be envied; but—neither was he.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### POSSIBILITIES.

TOWARDS morning, exhausted nature triumphed, and Amy fell into a sound sleep. When she awoke the sun was shining brightly, and everything seemed so cheerful that it was impossible to take the gloomiest view of things.

In the afternoon, as they were returning from an expedition to the ruined castle, it was suggested that David might have driven over from Inverness, as the distance was only fifteen miles. He had not come, however, and Amy's spirits fell somewhat.

Next day, as Mrs. Dalrymple was feeling out of sorts, it was arranged that her husband should remain with her in the early part of the day and go out fishing afterwards. Thus Amy was free to spend some hours out of doors.

Now, her favourite walk had always been in the direction of the Falls; but this morning, when she had stood for a few minutes in the porch looking up and down the road as if undecided which way to go, she finally went to the left and walked towards the loch. This road led first to the landing-pier and then along the side of the loch to Inverness.

On her left were steep hill-sides thickly carpeted with purple heather. The owner of these hills had evidently been replenishing his purse at the expense of the wood, and the white roots of the recently cut trees brightened the dark hill-side. To the right was a sloping bank leading down to the loch, and separated from the road by a stone wall nearly four feet high. For the most part, one could only get bright glimpses of the rippling waters of Loch Ness through the trees; but there were occasional breaks, and Amy often stopped to enjoy the view.

When she had walked about two miles, she came to a little mountain stream which, having succeeded in descending by modest leaps from the top of the hill, found itself confronted by an inexorable rock. Seeing that it would be useless to attack it in a straightforward way, the stream had resolved to get round it, and had divided its forces in order to do this the more effectually. The small bodies of water were decidedly astonished to find themselves after a short journey angrily precipitated into a pool about twenty



feet below. When they had recovered themselves, they had to subdue their pride, and crawl miserably across the dusty road. Those that escaped, however, soon danced with joy to find themselves with their glittering array of cousins in the loch. Feeling thirsty, Amy tried to catch some of the falling drops, but could not manage it; so she clambered up the bank at the side, and found a deep pool behind the rock, where the waters rested for a little to take counsel together. Having quenched her thirst, she lay down on the heather, which made a very comfortable couch, and watched a little fish that had somehow got into the pool and seemed to be its only tenant. She wondered whether or not it ever grew tired of its cool retreat, and felt inclined to yield to the temptations of the eager drops and go forth in search of adventures.

The walk seemed to have made Amy forget her fears; but suddenly she looked up and listened intently, while the colour rose to her cheeks. The sound of wheels draws nearer, coming from the direction of Inverness; she gets up quickly, and places herself so that she is almost hidden by the rock, but can look down into the road. Can it be? . . . . As the horse's head becomes visible, she gazes down eagerly. There are four ladies in the carriage. Amy becomes conscious that her heart is beating wildly, and that she is terribly disappointed—she sinks down on the heather, trembling and ashamed. The stream continues in vain its affectionate murmur—it has no longer power to soothe her. . . .

That afternoon, when Amy was reading aloud to Mrs. Dalrymple, she found it difficult not to break down. Mrs. Dalrymple noticed the tears in her voice; but said nothing. She drew her own conclusions, however.

The result was the following conversation with John when he returned triumphantly with one half-pound trout:

‘We must do something about David. Cannot you go to Inverness and induce him to come back?’

‘No, Emily, you must remember that I refused to be your accomplice. All I promised was neutrality.’

‘Be serious, John. It is no joking matter now. I am anxious for Amy's sake.’

‘Has she told you anything?’

‘No, that is just the worst part of it. I do not know what has passed between them, and of course it is a delicate matter for a proud girl like Amy to talk to me about.’

‘My idea was, that a woman always confided these things to any other woman who happened to be near her.’

‘Yes, but you forget that I am David's relation.’

‘That would make a difference, certainly. How would it do,

now, if I were to disguise myself as a woman and do the sympathising confidant? I should like the part. What a fool David is! Amy is far too nice a girl to be sacrificed to his obstinacy. I wonder what makes her like him. He is much older than she is, and, though he is my brother, he is hardly an Adonis—nor even a Hercules.'

'But then, John, Amy is not quite like other girls.'

After thinking a little, John said earnestly :

'Look here, Emily—I'm really as eager about this as you; but take my advice. Give him a week, and then I shall write to him. To interfere with him sooner would be dangerous.'

## CHAPTER IX.

'COME BACK.'

SATURDAY and Sunday passed wearily enough for Amy. Even on Monday there was no news, but on Tuesday morning there was a letter to John in which David referred vaguely to some intended journey; but still said nothing about his return to Drumna-drochit.

Now, one of David's peculiarities was, that every now and then, after having left his friends for a long time in ignorance as to his whereabouts, he would write to them from Egypt, Palestine, or some other far distant land to which his studies had attracted him; so these dark hints of his with regard to travelling alarmed Mr. and Mrs. Dalrymple.

Amy's cheeks had already lost the bloom for which they had all praised the mountain air; but, as she heard this letter read, she grew still paler, and her lips were compressed as if in pain; for she, too, was aware of David's peculiarity. She had been trying hard to be brave during the suspense of the last two or three days, but her philosophy did not avail her as it had done in her earlier trials. Then her troubles had been inevitable. Nothing that she could have done would have altered the course of events. All that then happened to her had evidently been determined by implacable destiny, and she had only to resign herself to suffer.

But now it was different. Resignation did not seem the only course. There was room for action on her part, and it was the struggle going on between her pride and love that made her look so ill. At times, when the tone of his voice and the expression of his face were most present to her, she felt perfect assurance of his love, and the question arose within her,—Should she give him some sign that he possessed hers? Could she do it? If she

answered 'Yes,' and began to think out a letter to him, there rushed in an army of doubts. What if she should be mistaken? After all, her imagination might have deceived her. She had perhaps misinterpreted the meaning of his looks and tone. After the arrival of the letter the struggle was intensified, and was almost more than she could bear.

On Thursday morning she sat down at a little table in her room and tried to write. Half a dozen notes were written and torn up. Two hours had passed, and yet it was not done. At last, having sat for half an hour with 'Dear Mr. Dalrymple' on the sheet before her, she gave it up in despair. The only words that rang in her ears were—'Come back.'

Outside it was a wild day, and Amy, who had always liked being out in a high wind, suddenly started up, seized her hat and jacket, and rushed out, feeling that she must be alone and in the midst of the storm.

The maid-servant gazed wonderingly after her, as she almost ran past the few houses of the village, and turned as usual towards the Falls. The trees tossed and creaked, as the wind roared through them, in sympathy with the surging billows of thought that made her brain whirl. She hardly paused an instant till she had reached that summer-house where, so short a time before, life had for a moment seemed so full of peace. The contrast was too bitter. She threw herself down on her knees, rested her head on the rough seat, and sobbed. . . .

After some discussion with his wife, John Dalrymple despatched the following characteristic note:—

'DEAR DAVID,—Don't be a fool and run off to the other end of nowhere without saying good-bye to your friends. Emily and I are well. Amy has been ill ever since you left; she seems to miss her daily dose of Greek. Tastes differ. You had better come back.

'Yours,

JOHN.'

This letter reached David on Thursday morning. He read it two or three times, and the expression of his face, which had been so gloomy as to have frightened the waiters during the past week, became more and more hopeful and joyous. Then he muttered, frowning again:

'If it is true, what a brute she must think me!'

The view of the case which John's last words suggested to him was quite new. On that day when Amy left him and he could not work, David had awakened to the knowledge that she had taken

possession of his heart. He tried to master his love in the days that followed, and never thought that he was causing her pain. Any kindness she had shown him had been attributed by him, with a diffident bitterness resulting from his former experience, to the fact that Amy was a woman and he was the only fellow near. Once since he had left the thought of the possibility that she cared for him had presented itself; but he immediately stifled it, saying to himself, 'What should a girl find to care for in a grey-headed old idiot like me?'

He was soon on his way to Drumnadrochit, and, as he drove along, hope and fear by turns possessed him. . . .

They never knew exactly how they came to be in one another's arms. Perhaps a louder blast than usual had drowned their words, and that might account for their omitting to exchange assurances of love. Presently he said :

'My darling, what did you think of me?'

'I thought you were never coming back,' answered Amy in a voice which still trembled.

'If I had thought for a moment that you could ever care for me, I should never have gone away; but I could not bear to be near you any longer.'

'Then, you are not going to Egypt!' said Amy, half laughing, but with the tremor of past sobs in her voice.

He held her face so that he might gaze into the tender eyes, and said, after a pause :

'Not till you go with me. Will you, some day?'

She spoke no word, but he read his answer in her face, and a long kiss was the result of it. . . .

While they had been heedless of all around, the wind had fallen : clouds had gathered, the sky had grown darker and darker, and now they were suddenly aroused by a loud peal of thunder. It had been muttering in the distance unheard by them. Flashes of lightning quickly succeeded each other; the thunder rolled overhead; the rain came down in torrents, and presently the wind rose again more furious than ever, and seemed to intend to tear their shelter with it in its mad career. It was impossible to talk; but that was not necessary. They were at peace with each other, and it did not matter what storms raged without.

Mrs. Dalrymple became very much alarmed about Amy on the first outbreak of the storm, and was frequently at the window watching anxiously for her. When the rain ceased and the clouds were flying before the wind, she called out :

‘John, John, he has done it! Here they are, at last!’ and as they came in, John said:

‘Storms seem to be your element. You both look wonderfully well. What have you been doing to Amy to give her back her roses?’

‘I have been persuading her to take you for a brother-in-law,’ was David’s answer.

The joyous effect of these words may be imagined.

In the evening, John asked suddenly:

‘What about the vow, old fellow?’

He thoroughly deserved the terrible glance bestowed on him by his wife; but—he had lost his wager.

David looked tenderly at Amy’s blushing face, and said quietly:

‘Some vows, like some customs, are “more honoured in the breach than in the observance.”’

Amy did not look at him then, but, when she did, it was not easy for him to resist the temptation to take her in his arms again, though they were not alone.

There was a wedding from Mrs. Dalrymple’s in December. Of all her presents, the one most appreciated by the bride was a beautifully bound copy of the October number of the before-mentioned ‘Review.’

M. J. M. ROBERTSON.

## George Colman, Elder and Younger.

'I HAVE met George Colman occasionally, and thought him extremely pleasant and convivial. Sheridan's humour, or rather wit, was always saturnine, and sometimes savage; he never laughed (at least, that I saw—and I watched him), but Colman did. If I had to *choose*, and could not have both at a time, I should say, "Let me begin the evening with Sheridan, and finish it with Colman." Sheridan for dinner, Colman for supper; Sheridan for claret or port, but Colman for everything, from the Madeira and champagne at dinner, the claret, with a *layer of port* between the glasses, up to the punch of the night, and down to the grog or gin and water of daybreak; all these I have threaded with both the same. Sheridan was a grenadier company of life guards, but Colman a whole regiment of *light infantry*, to be sure, but still a regiment.' So wrote Byron of the younger Colman, whose wit, however, was hereditary; for there was a certain George Colman the Elder, the author of the best comedy, after the 'School for Scandal,' of the second half of the eighteenth century, of whom we must first give some account.

He was born in 1733. His father, Francis Colman, was minister at Vienna in the reign of the First George, and plenipotentiary at the Court of Florence at the time of his son's birth. He survived that event only one year. He appears to have been a gentleman of polished manners, and contemporaries speak highly of his affability and his fine taste in music, literature, and the drama. The orphan boy was now adopted by the famous William Pulteney, who had married Mrs. Colman's sister. Scandal imputed this benevolence to a paternal instead of to an avuncular affection, and George considered it necessary, in a fragment of autobiography, many years afterwards, to take up the imputation, and to demonstrate that, as his mother had resided in Florence four or five years previous to his birth, and as his uncle during that period had not quitted England, it was impossible that such a relationship could exist. The truth or falsehood of such a report matters very little now, and the old scandal was scarcely worth repeating. George was sent to Westminster, and was afterwards entered as a student at Oxford, in 1751.

On January 30, 1754, he, in conjunction with Bonnell Thornton, started the 'Connoisseur,' a periodical after the style of the 'Spectator.' Thornton had been his chum both at school

and college. He was the son of a rich apothecary of Maiden Lane, and was intended for a doctor, but neither work nor application of any kind being to his taste, he set up for a wit and a scribbler. A story that has furnished more than one dramatist with a situation more comic than probable, is related as a fact in connection with this young scapegrace. One night, while he was supposed to be studying hard at Christ Church, upon entering the boxes of Drury Lane he found himself face to face with his father. After eyeing him for a moment, the old gentleman proceeded to express his indignation at the rencontre in very strong terms. Knowing the stern temper of his parent, and fearing that some pecuniary inconvenience might result to him from this escapade, he, with the cool effrontery of a comedy hero, assured his interlocutor that he was mistaken in supposing him to be his son, and upon the father persisting, assumed a tone of highly offended dignity, objurgated 'old Wigsby's' impudence, and quitted the box. He now rushed away to a livery-keeper, hired a post chaise, dashed off to Oxford as fast as horses could take him, and arrived there in time for chapel the next morning. When, an hour or two afterwards, the elder Thornton arrived, he found young Hopeful in morning gown and slippers, surrounded by medical works, writing a dissertation on Cramp. Still not quite satisfied, he waited upon the Dean, who informed him that his son had certainly attended divine worship that morning. This information completely dissipated his doubts, and, very much ashamed of having wronged so studious a young man, he made him a handsome present and departed. Bonnell was no more diligent in his literary undertakings than he had been in his graver studies, and when it was his turn to supply the number of the 'Connoisseur,' he was seldom ready. Frequently, when Colman called upon him for the copy of the essay that was to appear the next morning, not even the subject had been thought of. 'Sit down, Colman,' he would say; 'we must give the blockheads something;' and while his collaborateur was scribbling away in desperation, he would walk up and down the room sipping brandy and water, taking snuff, but never troubling himself to offer a suggestion, except to bid his friend write away. For those who love to catch glimpses of the time—in its habit as it lived—of its manners, follies, modes of thought, there is still pleasant reading to be found in the pages of the 'Connoisseur.' Goldsmith highly praised it in the 'Monthly Review.' 'He is the first writer,' says the doctor, 'since Bickerstaff, who has been perfectly satirical, yet perfectly good-natured; and who never, for the sake of declamation, represents simple folly as absolutely criminal. He has solidity to please the grave, and humour and wit to allure the gay.'

At the desire of his uncle Pulteney, Colman selected the law as a profession; but he had no more love for Blackstone than had Thornton for Galen, and was more frequently to be found in the theatres and coffee-houses than in his chambers poring over parchment and leather. Pulteney, who was now Earl of Bath, was continually writing him letters upon the subject. 'When you take your bachelor's degree,' he says in one, 'I promise to take you from the University and place you in some chambers in Lincoln's Inn, of which society you have been sometime a member. When you are there, I tell you beforehand, I will have you closely watched, and be constantly informed how you employ your time. I must have no running to play-houses or other places of public diversion; but your whole time must be given up to attend the Courts of Westminster Hall during their sittings in the mornings, and your evenings must be employed at home in your own chambers in assiduous application and study, until you have fitted yourself to make a figure at the bar.'

Colman took his M.A. degree in 1758, after which he quitted the University and went on circuit. The only incident connected with his very brief legal career which has been recorded is his saving two scoundrels from being hanged at Oxford, upon which his uncle Pulteney wrote him a letter of congratulation. At the end of the term we find him again in London, scraping an acquaintance with Garrick by means of a pamphlet entitled 'A Letter of Abuse to David Garrick,' in which, under pretence of taking up the cause of Garrick's rivals, he held them up to ridicule, and insinuated some very delicate flattery to the great actor. This procured him an introduction to Roscius, who never neglected any person who praised him; and in a little time Colman was in so much estimation at Drury Lane that Murphy, when negotiating for the production of his farce 'The Upholsterer,' considered his good opinion a recommendation worth quoting; and in the long dispute over the same author's play, 'The Orphan of China,' Colman was chosen for umpire. A young gentleman with an itch for scribbling could not possibly remain long in such close connection with the drama without trying his hand at that most enticing form of composition; and in 1760 he produced a farcical piece in one act, entitled 'Polly Honeycombe,' in which the novel-reading propensities of the young ladies of the age were good-humouredly satirised. Honeycombe was the pseudonym of the editor of the 'Royal Female Magazine,' which was chiefly made up of the silliest and most vapid sentimental novels. The skit was a complete success; but the author, on account of his relations with his uncle Bath, did not consider it prudent to declare himself. Early in the



ensuing year he placed 'The Jealous Wife' in Garrick's hands; the underplot and the characters of Russet, Charles, Lord Trinket, and Lady Free love were borrowed from 'Tom Jones,' but Mr. and Mrs. Oakley and the Major are original creations. Probably the absurd side of jealousy has never been more felicitously ridiculed than in the best scenes of this comedy; but it appears to have gone through much revision, pruning, and condensation from the manager's pen before it assumed its present shape. Garrick himself played Oakley, but he was not much at home in the part, and its success on the first night, which during the earlier part of the performance seemed rather doubtful, was ascribed entirely to Mrs. Pritchard's fine acting as the wife. The comedy is still familiar to old playgoers, and perhaps the two leading characters were never more admirably performed than they were some few years ago at Drury Lane by Phelps and Mrs. Hermann Vezin. Uncle Bath was now let into the secret, and, although the probabilities are that he would have closed his doors against an unsuccessful dramatist, who had neglected his injunctions and disobeyed his commands about running to play-houses, he very warmly congratulated the successful one.

Colman now very soon threw aside wig and gown for ever, and devoted himself entirely to literature. He started the 'St. James's Chronicle,' a capital periodical full of literary gossip, in collaboration with Garrick and Thornton; wrote more farces, 'The Musical Lady' and 'The Deuce is in Him'; produced alterations of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and of Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Philaster'; and during Garrick's long visits to the Continent in 1763 he was installed as part manager with Lacy and George Garrick at Drury Lane.

From the favour which the Earl had always shown him he had cherished hopes that a large share of his uncle's enormous wealth would descend to him; but Colman's great expectations descended to the very moderate reality of an annuity of nine hundred guineas and the succession to a fine estate; the latter, however, was subject to the approbation of the next heir, General Pulteney. The General was quite as mean and avaricious as his brother, and had a great dislike to Colman's theatrical connections, more especially to a certain Miss Ford, an actress by whom George had a son, and whom he afterwards married. This honourable act, and his purchase of a fourth share of the Covent Garden patent with six thousand pounds left him by his mother, completed his rich relation's disgust, and lost him the approbation upon which his estate depended. This was in 1767. In the previous year he had produced, in conjunction with Garrick, his most famous comedy, 'The

**Clandestine Marriage.** His first sketch of Lord Ogleby, suggested by the proud lord in the first picture of the *Marriage à la Mode*, was modified by his collaborateur into the delicious, vain, decrepit, impecunious old fop, as we at present know him; the fine last act, in which the old noble so suddenly but naturally throws off his follies and meannesses, and rises to the true gentleman, is said to be the work of the same skilful hand. Thus the finest part of the comedy must be assigned to Garrick; but to Colman still remain the admirable portraits of the purse-proud citizen Stirling, his vulgar sister Mrs. Heidelberg, the equally vulgar daughter; Canton, the Swiss, and the remaining characters, together with the general arrangement of the plot and incidents. The '*School for Scandal*,' the '*Clandestine Marriage*,' and '*She Stoops to Conquer*' are the three comedies of the second half of the eighteenth century, and none written since can compare with them. Colman intended Lord Ogleby for Garrick, and was highly offended when the great actor resigned the character to King; but probably the play rather gained than lost by the exchange, for a more consummate performance than King's was never witnessed. The elder Farren, who had seen the original, was his successor in the part, and that fine artist, Mr. Phelps, brought down the tradition to within the memory of young playgoers.

The breach just referred to between Garrick and Colman was greatly widened by the latter joining the management of the rival house. Some time afterwards they met at the dinner-table of a mutual friend at Bath, and a reconciliation was patched up, but the old cordial relations were never re-established. Colman's first production at Covent Garden was an adaptation of Voltaire's '*L'Écossaise*,' which he called '*The English Merchant*.' It was successful in its day, but is now quite forgotten. It was followed by '*The Man of Business*,' upon which the same epitaph may be pronounced.

The four lessees of the Covent Garden patent, Harris, Powell, Rutherford, and Colman, who were nicknamed the four kings of Brentford, did not form an amicable brotherhood, for there was scarcely a business arrangement that they did not quarrel over; and at length, in 1774, Colman grew weary of this perpetual war, and, disposing of his share to his three partners, laid down his managerial crown of thorns, and retired. Two years afterwards he purchased the little theatre in the Haymarket from Foote for an annuity of sixteen hundred pounds, which proved a very good investment, as Foote only lived to receive two quarters' payment. In order that it might not interfere with the great winter theatres, the Haymarket licence extended only from March 30 to September 30;

but this restriction was not without its advantages, since it enabled the manager to take his pick from the company of the winter houses, and many of the best actors were glad to fill up the summer at reduced salaries; and hither came country actors who aspired to metropolitan honours, and some of the most famous London favourites made their *début* upon this stage.

So great was the success of Colman's first season, that he determined to reconstruct the theatre before commencing his second. The house had been built in 1720, upon the site of the King's Head Inn, at an entire cost, including scenery and dresses, of 1,500*l.*; Foote made some alterations and renovations to it, but by the year 1778 it must have fallen into a very shabby and dilapidated condition. 'The house was new roofed,' writes George Colman (the younger), 'the ceiling brightened, the slips, sidelong appendages in the olden times to the upper gallery, were turned into a third tier of front boxes; and an approach of a few feet wide and fewer deep, dignified by the name of a lobby, was made to the boxes, whereas in Foote's days there was scarcely any space between them and the street; so that the attention of the audience in this part of the theatre was frequently distracted by post horns and the out-of-doors cry of "Extraordinary News from France," while the modern Aristophanes was threatening French invaders with peppering their flat-bottomed boats in the character of Major Sturgeon. But after all, the avenues to the side boxes were so narrow that two stout gentlemen could scarcely pass one another, and I often thought it would be better to furnish my side-box customers with a bell to tie round their necks at the pay-door to give warning of their approach and prevent jostling.'

The next few years of Colman's life seem to have been easy and prosperous. Under his management many of the future stars of the theatrical firmament made their first bows to a London audience, notably Miss Farren, Henderson, and Edwin. He continued to write new pieces, and make alterations of old ones—all of which have long since passed into oblivion—until 1785, when he was suddenly seized with paralysis, the result of suppressed gout; from that time until 1789, when he sank into a state of utter imbecility, he daily grew more and more feeble in body and mind. In this melancholy condition he survived until 1794.

To the Haymarket throne succeeded his son George, who had long since reigned as regent. George was born about 1762. In his 'Random Recollections' he gives some amusing sketches of his own life and of the celebrities who came to his father's house. One of the first that he encountered was no less a person than Samuel Johnson. It was at a dinner party—the first to which he

had been admitted. Upon entering the drawing-room, he and his father found a very big gentleman, attired in rusty brown and black worsted stockings, seated upon a fauteuil of rose-coloured satin, from which he did not deign to rise at their entrance. 'During a pause in the conversation, my father took me by the hand, and said, "Doctor Johnson, this is little Colman." The doctor bestowed a slight ungracious glance upon me, and, continuing the rotatory movement of his head, renewed the conversation. Again there was a pause; again the anxious father, who had failed in his first effort, seized the opportunity of pushing his progeny with, "This is my son, Dr. Johnson." The great man's contempt for me was now roused to wrath; and knitting his brows, he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "I see him, sir!" He then fell back in his fauteuil, as if giving himself up to meditation, implying that he would not be further plagued with an old fool or a young one.' Much more pleasant had been his earlier experiences of Goldsmith, whose comedy of 'She Stoops to Conquer' his father, after many snubs and delays, had brought out at Covent Garden. Goldy used to amuse him and pet him, and one day the little mischievous imp hit the poet such a slap upon the face that he left the mark of his fingers there. For this naughtiness he was locked up in a dark room, from which, however, he was very soon released by the good-natured doctor, who fondled him, and soothed his sobs, and performed conjuring tricks to make him forget his disgrace.

Like his father, George was educated at Westminster and Oxford; but so wild were his courses, and so great was his predilection for the theatre, that his father removed him from Oxford to Aberdeen. But the young scapegrace preferred scribbling bad plays and poetry to poring over classics and mathematics, and as far as learning went, his sojourn at these different seats of learning was not profitable. One of his dramatic productions, written during his stay in the north, 'The Female Dramatist,' was brought out anonymously at the Haymarket, and was, he tells us, 'uncommonly hissed.' Upon his return from Aberdeen, his father entered him as a student at Lincoln's Inn, and took chambers for him in King's Bench Walk, in the Temple. But eating oysters for a few terms was about all the progress he made in legal qualifications.<sup>1</sup> About this time he fell in love with one of the Haymarket actresses, Miss Catherine Morris, and his father packed him off to

<sup>1</sup> R. B. Peake, the biographer of the Colmans, says: 'The students of Lincoln's Inn keep term by dining, or pretending to dine, in the hall during term time. Those who feed there are accommodated with wooden trenchers instead of plates, and previously to the dinner oysters are served up by way of prologue to the play. Eating the oysters, or going into the hall without eating them, if you please, and then departing elsewhere, is quite sufficient for their keeping.'

Switzerland in the hope that absence would cure the fever ; but it seems only to have increased it, for the first thing he did upon his return to England was to elope with the lady to Gretna Green. His father's illness, which occurred soon afterwards, placed him in an independent condition. Somehow or other, the affairs of the theatre, although every season had been highly successful, were rather embarrassed at this time, and it was to his son's pen that the elder Colman was indebted for freedom from pecuniary troubles during the last years of his life. Between 1785 and 1795 young George wrote 'Turk and No Turk,' 'Incle and Yarico,' 'Ways and Means,' the once famous melodrama of 'The Mountaineers'—in which, as the love-mad Octavian, Kemble, Kean, Elliston, and so many of their successors achieved great triumphs—and several others that it would be useless to name, since they are now quite forgotten. In 1796, he wrote for Drury Lane the drama of the 'Iron Chest,' which was so elaborately revived by Mr. Irving during the Lyceum season of 1879. This work is remarkable as being, probably, the one solitary instance of a play unequivocally condemned upon its first representation, and throughout its first brief run, afterwards becoming a decided success, and holding a foremost place among stock pieces in town and country for upwards of half a century. The idea of the plot was taken from Godwin's 'Caleb Williams,' but there is very little affinity between that strangely powerful novel and its dramatic offspring, except in the character of Sir Edward Mortimer, which is an exact transcript of the Falkland of the story. The cast embraced some of the most famous actors of the day: John Kemble was the hero; Bannister was Wilford; Dodd, Adam Winterton; Wroughton, Fitzhardinge; Barrymore, Rawbold; Suett, Sampson; Miss Farren was Helen, Signora Storace, Barbara, etc. As originally written, it was half drama, half opera; only one of the many pieces of music—solos, duets, concerted pieces—was retained by Mr. Irving. In the famous preface affixed to the first edition of 'The Iron Chest' Colman lays the entire blame of its failure upon Kemble. He begins by complaining that there was never any proper rehearsal of the play. Kemble was ill at the time, and attended only the last two or three. When the night came, he says that he found Kemble in his dressing-room, very weak and taking opium pills, a medicine he used very largely. When the scene drew off and discovered him seated in his library, 'gloom and desolation sat upon his brow, and he was habited, from the wig to the shoe string, with the most studied exactness. Had one of King Charles the First's portraits walked out of its frame upon the boards of the theatre, it could not have afforded a truer representation of ancient melancholy

dignity. . . But the spectators, who gaped with expectation at his first appearance, yawned with lassitude before his first exit.' He refused to make an apology for his indisposition. 'One-third of the play only was yet performed, and I was to pursue my journey through two stages more, upon a broken down poster, on whose back lay all the baggage of my expedition. Miserably and most heavily in hand did the poster proceed! He groaned, he lagged, he coughed, he winced, he wheezed. Never was seen so sorry a jade! The audience grew completely soured.' A week elapsed between the first and second performance, but Kemble, according to the author, was even worse on the second night than he had been on the first. In stage parlance, he walked through the part. 'His emotions and passions were so rare,' continues the preface, 'and so feeble, that they seasoned his general insipidity like a single grain of wretched pepper thrown into the largest dose of water gruel that ever was administered to an invalid. For the most part, he toiled on line after line, in a dull current of undiversified sound, which stole upon the ear far more drowsily than the distant murmurings of Lethe; with no attempt to break the lulling stream, or check its steep inviting course. Frogs in a marsh, flies in a bottle, wind in a crevice, a preacher in a field, the drone of a bagpipe, all, all yielded to the inimitable and soporific monotony of Mr. Kemble!' This is doubtless an exaggerated description, and it was afterwards greatly modified, but Colman was very sore upon the failure of a piece for which he was to have received a large sum; and notwithstanding the judgment of press and public, he resolved to give it another trial. Elliston made his first appearance in London upon the Haymarket stage during that year, and, having achieved a marked success, Colman determined that he should essay the part of Sir Edward Mortimer. To appear in a character that Kemble had failed in was an honour that the young actor would have fain declined, but the manager insisted, and on August 29, six months after the fiasco at Drury Lane, the 'Iron Chest' was revived at the Haymarket, with a success as distinct as had been its previous failure. Years afterwards, Edmund Keen electrified the town in the part of the gloomy hero. But such genius as his alone could give vitality to the turgid, stilted stuff. Colman always protested that Kemble's failure was purposed and malicious on account of an offence he had given him. As soon as the play was completed, he had invited Kemble to dine with him to have it read. Kemble became very gloomy, and the reading was suspended frequently to pass the bottle; the whole of that night they sat together drinking, and the whole of the following day and the next night. At about four o'clock in the second morning

both awoke simultaneously out of a doze, and stared at each other. 'What are you staring at?' cried Colman nervously; 'your eyes are on fire! By —, Kemble, I believe you are the devil incarnate.' Colman used to express his belief that the actor never forgave those words, and revenged himself upon the play.

In 1797 Colman produced, at the Haymarket, the first of that series of sterling comedies by which his name is now chiefly remembered, 'The Heir-at-Law.' 'The Poor Gentleman' followed in 1800, and 'John Bull' at Covent Garden in 1803.

It is upon these three works that Colman's claim to be ranked among the great English dramatic writers entirely rests. Comedies they are not, but rather plays in which the humorous and serious elements are about equally mingled; they have much in common with the sentimental comedy of Holcroft and Cumberland, but they yet more closely resemble the domestic drama of low life so popular upon the stage until within these last ten or twenty years, and still performed at East End and suburban theatres. Holcroft, Cumberland, and Mrs. Inchbald loved to depict troubles and struggles and virtuous poverty, but it was always genteel poverty, chiefly that of earls' daughters discarded by stony-hearted parents for marrying poor officers of superhuman virtue. Colman was one of the first who drew our sympathies to the woes of the lowly born; he may be said to have created the virtuous peasant, who was always lugging out his small stock of money to give his last shilling to anyone who told a pitiful tale, who spouted sentiment and morality by the yard, was as ready with his fists as with his tongue, and who invariably expressed joy by stamping his hob-nailed boots and singing 'Ri ti tol de iddity, tol te iddity,' etc. This noble creature, after being the idol of pit and gallery for some sixty years, was barbarously murdered in the burlesques of one H. J. Byron, some fifteen to twenty years ago. The simple rustic maiden whose wardrobe was contained within a cotton pocket-handkerchief, who trusted and believed in everybody, and wept with everybody, and was as innocent of London ways as one of her own lambs; the forlorn damsel who had loved 'not wisely, but too well,' and the lowly but proud and rigidly virtuous father, who seemed to pretty equally divide his time between praying, cursing, and apostrophising his white hairs, were also popularised by the same pen. While the 'School for Scandal' and 'The Rivals' still delight us by their pictures of men and manners of a past age, and their delightful wit and brilliant repartee, 'The Heir-at-Law,' 'The Poor Gentleman,' and 'John Bull,' when resuscitated by some favourite actor, produce only weariness and disappointment. The most original character in 'The Heir-at-

Law,' Doctor Pangloss, which Mr. J. S. Clarke has rendered so familiar to playgoers of the present day, was named after Voltaire's famous optimist, and is said to have been taken bodily from 'Fortune in her Wits,' a translation of Cowley's Latin comedy, 'Naufragium Jocularé'; but the character and its wit are obsolete, and exclusively the creation of a state of society that has long since passed away. There is some fun in the retired tallow-chandler and his wife who have been raised by mistake to aristocratic dignity, but it is so old-fashioned, so threadbare, and the jokes are so stale, that it bores rather than amuses; while the rustics Zekiel and Cicely Homespun, the sentimental Caroline and her lover, and the terribly didactic Steadfast and Kenrick, are altogether of that artificial and superhuman race of theatrical beings, waxwork figures whose outward semblances are shifted to please the taste of each new generation. Much of the dialogue is humorous if it be not brilliant, the incidents are lively, and were amusing a couple of generations ago; and the whole is arranged by a master of stage-craft; and that is all the praise that can be honestly accorded to a work which was regarded by our grandfathers as a masterpiece. But at the same time we must remember that this play was interpreted by a company of comedians that could scarcely be paralleled in any other dramatic era. Suett was Daniel Dowlas; Munden was Zekiel Homespun; Fawcett, Dr. Pangloss; Irish Johnstone, Kenrick; and these men were as exactly fitted to these parts as were the Prince of Wales's company to Robertson's characters; while future generations will as much fail to discover the charm that drew audiences hundreds of nights to witness 'Caste' or 'School,' as we do to appreciate the encomiums of our grandfathers upon 'The Heir-at-Law.'

One glimpse of how these old lay-figures might be vivified into flesh and blood was given to modern playgoers by the late Mr. Phelps's noble performance of Job Thornberry; in the mouth of that fine artist, the turgid sentiment and stilted language became humanised, and as appropriate as when it was delivered by the original, Fawcett. But 'John Bull' is Colman's masterpiece, and both in the serious and comic scenes very much superior to any other of his works. Sturdy Job Thornberry is a well-drawn character which has been imitated by many succeeding dramatists. Dennis Brulgrudery and Dan in the hands of Johnstone and Emery, must have been highly diverting; while Lewis as the Hon. Tom Shuffleton, the fast man of the period, would have made a finished picture out of what change of manners has reduced to a very conventional figure. But the hero, Peregrine, is probably the most exaggerated type of the sentimental school that the



legitimate drama retains. Conceive any human being addressing a girl in this fashion: 'When ages, indeed, are nearly equal, Nature is prone to breathe so warmly on the blossoms of a friendship between the sexes, that the fruit is desire; but Time, fair one, is scattering snow on my temples, while Hebe waves her freshest ringlets over yours. Rely, then, on one who has numbered years sufficient to correct his passions; who has encountered difficulties enough to teach him sympathy; and who would stretch forth his hand to a wandering female, and shelter her like a father. . . . Come, do not droop. The cause of your distress, perhaps, is trifling; but light gales of adversity will make women weep. A woman's tear falls like the dew that zephyrs shake from roses. . . . Genuine nature and unsophisticated morality, that turn disgusted from the rooted adepts in vice, have now a reclaiming tear to shed over the children of error. Then, let the sterner virtues, that allow no plea for human frailty, stalk on to Paradise without me. The mild associate of my journey shall be charity; and my pilgrimage to the shrine of mercy will not, I trust, be worse performed for having aided the weak, on my way, who have stumbled in their progress.'

In 1803, when 'John Bull' was first produced, this was considered the acme of fine writing; it was the age of toasts and sentiments, when a man could not raise a glass to his lips without prefacing the draught with moral platitudes. The reaction from the brazen vice of the first half of the eighteenth century, the influence of Richardson's and Rousseau's novels, and above all that of the French Revolution, which exalted the poor and the humble, and rendered their wrongs and their woes subjects of universal interest and sympathy, had each its share in the production of this curious and stilted literature. *A propos* of 'John Bull,' there is a good story told by Fawcett, in Genest's 'History of the Stage': 'We got "John Bull" from Colman, act by act, as he wanted money, but the last act did not come, and Harris (one of the managers) refused to make any further advances; at last necessity drove Colman to make a finish, and he wrote the fifth act in one night on separate pieces of paper—as he filled one piece after the other, he threw them on the floor, and, finishing his liquor, went to bed. Harris, who impatiently expected the *dénouement* of the play, according to promise, sent Fawcett to Colman, whom he found in bed. By his direction, Fawcett picked up the scraps and brought them to the theatre.' 'John Bull' ran forty-seven nights, a great run in those days, and Colman netted 1,200*l.* by it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The usual payment for theatrical productions in those days was three hundred

As Foote had done before him, he almost entirely monopolised the Haymarket stage with his own productions. He was intensely jealous of every contemporary dramatist, and considered himself to be superior even to Sheridan himself. In conversation we have Byron's authority for believing that the two famous wits were pretty equally matched. Lord William Lennox, in 'Celebrities I have known,' says: 'Colman was in his fifty-fifth year when I first met him, but he was as playful and lively as a kitten, and never ceased from the moment we sat down until the hour of departure, which was not an early one, to keep the table in a roar.' Some of his good things which have been handed down to us are worth repeating as specimens of his humour. A musical fanatic was boring a company with his ecstasies over some new ballad. 'Whenever I hear it, it quite carries me away!' he exclaimed. 'Can anybody whistle it?' inquired Colman. A melodrama, entitled 'The Mysteries of the Castle,' was being played to very bad houses. 'I suppose it is owing to the war,' remarked one of the actors. 'No, it is owing to the *piece*,' retorted the manager. Quite as severe was his comment upon a *débutant* who was making a miserable failure in 'Octavian,' and who, when he came to the line, 'I shall weep soon, and then I shall be better,' was answered *sotto voce* by the author, who was fidgetting in the wings, with—'I'll be d—d if you will, if you weep your eyes out.' One day, while dining with Lord Erskine, the ex-Chancellor was boasting that he owned nearly one thousand sheep. 'I perceive, then, that your lordship has still an eye to the woolsack,' said Colman. 'Have any bills been stuck up?' he inquired of the messenger who brought him word that an actress of his company named Wall was just dead. 'No, sir; why?' asked the man. 'They usually stick up bills on a *dead wall*, don't they?' was the retort. While on a visit to Lord North, he and some others were being conducted through the picture-gallery, when they came upon a portrait of a late lord with a white wand in his hand. 'What does that mean?' inquired one of the party. 'Oh, I suppose it represents the *North Pole*,' rejoined the wit. Like Foote, he was no respecter of persons, and would raise a laugh at the expense even of royalty, as soon as he would at that of more humble folks. In 1826 George the Fourth appointed him to the post of Lieutenant of His Majesty's Yeomen of the Guard. 'Your uniform is not well made, George,' remarked the King, the first time he appeared before him in his official dress, 'and I don't see the hooks and eyes.' 'Here are my eyes; where are yours?' retorted the wit,

guineas for the first nine nights, one hundred on the twentieth night, and one hundred and fifty for the copyright.

unhooking his coat. 'Why, Colman, you are older than I am,' said the Prince Regent one day. 'Oh no, sir, I could never have taken the liberty to come into the world before your Royal Highness,' was the quick reply. Sometimes his wit degenerated into ill breeding, as a specimen of which Peake relates the following story: In the year 1811, when he was in the King's Bench, the Duke of York, with whom he was a great favourite, obtained for him a day's liberty that he might dine at Carlton House. There were several guests, and the Prince, who presided, took scarcely any notice of his theatrical visitor; Colman was annoyed, and when the wine began to circulate he inquired of the Duke, who sat next to him, 'Who is that fine-looking fellow at the head of the table?' 'Hush, George,' whispered his good-natured friend; 'you'll get into a scrape.' 'No, no,' Colman went on in a loud voice; 'I have come to enjoy myself, and I want to know who that fine, square-shouldered, magnificent fellow is at the head of the table?' 'Be quiet, George; you know it is the Prince,' replied the Duke. 'Well, then,' persisted Colman, 'he is your elder brother: he doesn't look half your age. I remember the time when he sang a good song; and as I am out for a lark for only one day, if he is the same fellow he used to be, he would not refuse an old playfellow.' The Prince, rather enjoying the joke, complied. 'What a magnificent voice!' exclaimed Colman; 'I have heard nothing like it for years. I'll be hanged if I don't engage him for my theatre.'

His vanity and his desire to be talked about were inordinate. When in his later years he was in danger of being forgotten, he wrote anonymous abuse of himself to bring his name before the public again. As a manager he was jovial and pleasant; but in his business transactions he was selfish and ungenerous. When poor O'Keefe, who had lost his sight, was preparing an edition of his dramatic works to be published by subscription, he applied to Colman for permission to reprint some farces which he had sold to his father for a mere trifle, and was refused.

His later managerial career was not prosperous. Early in the present century he had taken his brother-in-law Morris into partnership,<sup>1</sup> an act which brought upon him endless trouble and litigation, and which in 1811 closed the Haymarket for an entire season, landed him in the King's Bench, and ultimately obliged him to give up his share of the management.

In 1824 he was appointed examiner of plays, and he exercised his powers with a despotism that rendered him the bugbear of

<sup>1</sup> His first wife's brother. His second wife, whom he married in 1809, was Mrs. Gibbs, a celebrated actress in her day.

actors and managers. All 'damns' and 'demmes,' the words 'Providence,' 'heaven,' 'hell,' and even 'oh lud,' were expunged from all MSS. submitted to him. 'It would make you laugh,' writes Gerald Griffin in one of his letters, 'to see the passages to which the gentleman (in his office of deputy licensee) objected as immoral and improper. For instance, he will have no expressions of piety, no appeal to Providence in situations of distress, allowed upon the stage; a hymn that I introduced was ordered to the right about, a little prayer put into the mouth of my heroine—the word "paradise," as applied to a beautiful country, and other matters of that kind.' And his avarice was equal to his purism. He would not permit a song or a glee to be introduced, or even an address to be spoken on the stage, until it had first passed through his hands, and left there a two-guinea fee. He even attempted, but unsuccessfully, to bring Oratorios and Mathews's 'At Home' under his jurisdiction.

He died on October 17, 1836, and was buried with his father in Kensington Church.

H. BARTON BAKER.

## Rival Queens.

### IV.

GABRIEL, though by this time fairly gone adrift on Love's seductive stream, took counsel with himself, and resolved against being too precipitate. With this laudable resolution in his mind, he decided not to go to the theatre any more that week ; and so, on Wednesday morning, whilst Inez was waiting for the hour of meeting with her husband, he started for home, and having spent a disconsolate hour or two there, cast his resolutions to the wind and returned to town. Had he stayed an hour longer, he would have seen his sister, who would have given him interesting news. Jane had that morning received a letter from the great *tragédienne* which, though addressed to Gabriel's sister, was intended partly for Gabriel himself. The letter stated that Inez would start on Monday for a country tour, beginning with Birmingham, and going on to all the great northern towns, to conclude in Edinburgh. The tour was arranged to last three months. Inez, when she wrote this letter, was in hope that Gabriel would make play enough within the time left to him to beg permission to write to her, at least.

It was strange that Gabriel, who went to the theatre every evening, should pass by the staring announcements of new engagements, 'Last appearances of Miss Galbraith,' and the rest with which the front of the house was placarded. But stranger things happen every day, and he went by them unheeding. Every night he saw Inez at the stage door, and every night until the last she gave him a smile and a word. He used to write whole reams to her, and always burned his epistles. He spent the greater part of his time in this self-contradictory exercise of writing and burning, but his prospects were not greatly advanced thereby. Saturday night came, and he was at the stage-door, mourning that a whole forty-eight hours must pass before Inez could again be so near him. Once more it was raining, and the street was quite clear of people. He was hungering for a smile and hoping for a word, but when Inez came she ran out with bent head to her carriage and drove away without a sign, pretending not to see him. The truth was, she was piqued at his stupidity, and she took it for granted that he knew of her inevitable departure. On such trifles do our poor little destinies turn, that half a dozen lives moved on this tiny pivot, and swung clean out of their old courses.

Gabriel was wounded, but he turned up blindly at the theatre on Monday night without having gone home on Sunday. He found the house a desert of empty benches; and a burlesque—so inane that those of to-day are brilliant in the memory of it—usurped the boards which he had only known as sacred to Inez and her magnificent art. He went sadly home, and saw the letter which he ought to have seen nearly a week before, and half resolved to go down to Birmingham and haunt the Theatre Royal as he had haunted Old Drury. But there was a chill upon him, somehow; and the half resolve never grew into action. So he idled about and painted and was miserable until an incident occurred which afforded a diversion.

Sunday came round, and with it came Mary Gilray. Jane and she would go out walking between afternoon and evening church, and Gabriel, being commanded to act as cavalier, went sadly with them, and was so intolerably dull that his sprightly sister bade him go back again. He pleaded a non-existent headache, and dropped behind to smoke and to nurse his own fancies. The girls went on together through a wood, and Gabriel, sitting on a fallen stump outside it, lit his cigar and mooned. He had been alone for perhaps half an hour when shriek on shriek suddenly resounded through the stillness of the Sabbath country air, and starting to his feet he heard his own name called in accents of agonised fear. He vaulted the stile and ran like a greyhound along the narrow woodland path, and in two minutes came in sight of the girls. Jane was embracing, and, as it seemed, supporting, her friend; and ceased not to shriek 'Gabriel!' until her brother, dashing through the undergrowth, suddenly appeared before her. Then she ejaculated, 'Thank Heaven!' and fainted. Gabriel, sorely alarmed and puzzled, caught a double burden in his arms, and looked round in wonderment for an explanation of affairs, finding none, nor sign of any. The wood was as still as death, except for the hum of a careless insect here and there, and there was no token of danger near. Perhaps the girls had seen an adder. Perhaps, even, one of them had been bitten! With an arm round the waist of each burden he made an effort to start for the path, out of which the girls had strayed some twenty yards. As he did so Mary opened her eyes and moaned, and he felt that she was caught somehow and immovable. Then the truth flashed upon him, and moving as delicately as he could he allowed her to fall backward very gently to the ground. Next he lowered Jane, who still lay limp and helpless. The actress had trodden upon one of those infernal machines called man-traps, of the presence of which plentiful notice was given, by boards affixed to trees along the

path. He knelt down before her, and seizing the jaws of the savage rusted thing he forced them back until they fastened with a sudden click, and then he gently drew the wounded girl from further danger.

'Here's a pretty business!' said Gabriel. 'What the deuce had *she* got to faint for?' regarding Jane with unbrotherly eye. 'I shall have to turn surgeon,' he murmured miserably, and blushed. The situation was more tragic to Gabriel than to the wounded lady. He drew out his handkerchief—fortunately a large one—and with an aspect and sense of guilty shame investigated the wounded ankle, and bound it tenderly but firmly. Then he called to mind a statement, somewhere made in his hearing, that if a girl faints you may restore her to consciousness by pinching her ear. He experimented on Jane with such success that she screamed and sat up *instantly*. Gabriel had perhaps under-estimated his own muscular forces.

'Run for a doctor,' gasped Jane feebly. 'She will bleed to death.'

'No, she won't,' said Gabriel. 'I have—' he blushed fiercely—'staunched the wound,' he said, and thought himself well through the statement.

'Can you—carry her home?' said the late vivacious Jane, in trembling accents.

'I suppose I shall have to,' responded the unhappy Gabriel, and shouldered his load unsentimentally.

'You mustn't carry her like that,' cried Jane shrilly. 'You'll break her. Carry her like this;' and sitting tear-stained in the bracken, Jane put her arms into maternal posture, as though she had a baby in them.

Gabriel obeyed, and went sturdily on. Jane arose and came limply after him, resenting this desertion, but seeing no way out of it. 'Brothers are unfeeling brutes,' said Jane. The person against whom this generalisation was particularly directed stuck viciously to his task until he reached the stile, when he sat down to breathe, with his unconscious burden in his arms. At this spectacle Jane, having mounted the stile, began to giggle hysterically.

'Don't be foolish, Jane,' said Gabriel. 'Run home and send for a doctor, and get things ready.'

Away went Jane, and Gabriel followed. By-and-bye Mary opened her eyes and became aware of her situation.

'Pray set me down,' she murmured. 'I can walk.'

'No, you can't,' said Gabriel.

'Pray let me try,' she besought him.

‘I shall do nothing of the sort, I assure you,’ said Gabriel. ‘It would be dangerous.’ This was very masterfully said, and Mary submitted. The pain was so great that she moaned. Gabriel looked down with sudden gentleness. ‘I am afraid I am a very clumsy nurse,’ he said.

‘No,’ she murmured, and moaned again.

Now, between carrying a feminine bundle in a dead faint, and a charming girl who is conscious of being carried and is very embarrassed by it, there is all the difference in the world. Gabriel began to recognise the difference, and his heart began to beat and his cheeks to burn. I hope I am not painting a paragon of manly modesty; but be that as it may, Gabriel’s arms had never before encircled the female form, and his present position was incredibly embarrassing. Yet, that fact notwithstanding, he rather began to like it; an apparent contradiction for which I am in no way responsible. He grew wonderfully sorry for her suffering—sorrow, he thought, than he had ever been for anything in his life before. And how pretty she was, poor, helpless, wounded creature! with her golden disordered head thrown back, and her white, round throat, and soft, smooth, innocent chin presented to Gabriel’s vision.

It is probable that the poets who have written songs and sonnets about the beloved one’s fairy-like form have never experienced the joy of carrying a handsome woman half a mile on a hot day.

For as to fairies that do fit  
To keep the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.

Gabriel’s arms ached, and another hundred yards would have done for him, yet he surrendered his burden unwillingly, and his arms felt curiously empty when he had laid her down. One of the servants had posted off for a doctor, and the man of science was there almost as soon as Gabriel and the patient. His examination was soon made, and his verdict given. A tendon was clean divided, and others were badly bruised. The doctor’s instructions included absolute rest for the injured limb, and he prophesied a month’s imprisonment, at which Mary clasped her hands piteously, and implored unavailingly for a shorter sentence. That evening Gabriel rode to the house of the manager, who lived no more than three miles away, and to him related the story of the accident. The manager expressed regrets and swore a little, and set off at once to revise engagements, while Gabriel went home again. He never thought of Inez all this while; not once did her image offer itself to his remembrance. Faithless Gabriel!

Notwithstanding the doctor’s prophecy, Mary was able in a few



days to be moved from one room to another, and by-and-bye to move herself, supported by a strong arm. There was no arm so strong as Gabriel's in the establishment, and certainly none more gentle. He used to look forward to the requisition of his services blushing and tremblingly. With one arm firmly and gently wound about the round waist, whilst a warm, round arm went about his neck, and a plump little hand—grown thinner lately, though—with blue veins staining its lovely whiteness, gripped his farther shoulder, how happy was Gabriel! how little he thought of Inez at these times! Then he and Mary got to talking to each other in an intimate way, and he read to her whilst she was too weak to hold the book for herself, and afterwards, propped up by luxurious cushions, she read to him, and they went their way, favoured by perpetual opportunity, and fell head and heels in love with each other—as young people under similar circumstances have done from time immemorial. Even when Mary had quite recovered, there was no call upon her time for a fortnight, and before she left, though nothing decisive had been said, the matter was as fairly settled between them as if they had set the bells a-ringing, and the clerk had done his singing, and the parson had pocketed his fee.

## V.

DURING all this time Inez was nursing her fancy for Gabriel, and for a week or two her belief in his devotion. Travellers in tropic lands tell wonderful stories of the rapid growth of vegetation. Inez carried a tropic heart, in which loves and hates sprang up (if only the seed were planted) swift as Jonah's gourd, but for no such ephemeral existence. When Gabriel was still silent—when he still refrained from following her—she began to nourish jealousies, and before the three months' tour was over she was enraged with love's bitter hunger, and in a mood to prove inimical to any milder love her lover might have found. She had a score of things to egg love on. Her hatred of Monsieur Paul sent her afresh to cling to this new passion. Her resolve to defy that rascal—her scornful detestation of the bonds in which he held her—the illegality of her love itself—her late lonely isolation—the possible sweetness of the beckoning future—these allured or drove her to the love that proved her fate. The beautiful, dangerous creature came back to London, and there it was the common talk that her charming friend was engaged to her faithless lover. She was not so blinded by her own passion that she did not know that Gabriel had never given her any claim upon him. Here was but a young

and handsome man who had for a week or two been fascinated by her and her art, as many thousands more had been within the last three years. She had gone away and he had forgotten her. That was all. A sufficiently commonplace story in her experience of the world. Every day brought her the beginning or the close of some such brief triumph, and she knew it. It was part of the life she lived—the air she breathed. But in this case all the difference lay in the fact that she herself had not forgotten.

Now, Miss Ray had long had in contemplation a great artistic *coup*. For three years she had been the charm and idol of the town in the graver sorts of comedy, and for three years she had been reading Shakespeare solidly with intent to appear in tragedy. Cleopatra and Lady Macbeth and Queen Constance she left apart as being at present beyond her powers, but Desdemona, Portia, and Imogen she made herself mistress of. Next she attacked the ‘Winter’s Tale,’ and finally ‘Measure for Measure,’ and to the last she held longest of all. It was partly her good fortune that she had never seen the character of Isabel on the stage, for tradition is rarely much of an aid to genius, and is often a heavy trammel. She had studied that part for full a year before she met Gabriel, and had written stage directions and criticisms which made more in volume than the play itself. When she went back to the theatre after her illness she proposed ‘Measure for Measure’ to the manager, who whistled ungallantly, and opined that it would be a blunder. Then she announced that she was willing to pay the cost of failure for a fortnight, calculating payments on the average basis of receipts. The manager explained that it was her reputation he feared for, and not the filling of the theatrical cash-box. But she worked at him until she drew forth a reluctant promise, and the play was put in rehearsal. Then she had countless combats with him—he going for tradition everywhere, and stickling for what the great Miss This and the great Mrs. T’other had done in the days before the stage decayed. For since the stage became an institution there has never been a time of which it has not been afterwards regretfully said that there were giants in *those* days; and the manager was a worshipper of tradition, even when it drove its head clean against common sense. But bit by bit and line by line the actress triumphed. Her fellow artists grumbled, and she encountered on all hands an opposition which it cost much persuasive sweet temper to subdue. At last, things being arranged to her mind after tedious rehearsals, the play was announced, the night came, the house was crowded, and a decisive triumph scored. Some of the critics lamented the loss of ‘this charming actress’ in the lighter walks of comedy, but most of them took the good the

gods provided, and were thankful that a real artist had at length discovered her own real strength.

This, to Inez, who anticipated and prophesied failure, was agony and gall and wormwood. Mary and she had been fast friends. Inez, indeed, had loved her dearly, and now hated her because of Gabriel. There is no passion which burns so fiercely on so little fuel as hate, and this last triumph of the unconscious unintending rival sent the flames up scorchingly. Isabel was a success so complete that Inez found herself forsaken by some of her old admirers, who began to follow the new triumphal car, and she cast about within herself for some means of humiliating her ancient friend. She was so rash and unadvised as to play Isabel herself—and the result was disastrous. She neither looked nor felt the character, and she failed. After this she went nursing a deadly rage and hatred, scarcely speaking a word apart from business, and holding aloof from all her friends.

The Chinese avoid a good many of the difficulties which attend the Western story-teller. Their dramatic representations occasionally last six months, and an author with them has time to move himself. They set down everything which happens to everybody in any way connected with the yarn they have to spin, but it is perhaps unnecessary to remark that this can only be done by a sacrifice of that brevity which magazine editors and British readers prize. I offer this statement by way of apology for an inartistic break—which must here be made.

## VI.

AMIDST the stage-struck youth of London nearly forty years ago, there was not one whom the mania hit harder than Robert Thwaite, a chemist and druggist's apprentice in Leather Lane. The chemist and druggist was a qualified surgeon, and spent most of his time in visiting poor patients, who paid him poorly. He was a meagre and abstracted man, and Robert profited but little under his tuition. Bob, indeed, would have profited but little under any master. He read tragedy from morn till night, and spouted it behind the counter whilst he pounded with his pestle or rolled away at his pills. He knew next to nothing of the properties of the articles he served, and cared, if possible, less than he knew. He had been caught a score of times in the act of flourishing his pestle and offering his kingdom for a horse. The gesture with which he condemned Buckingham to be beheaded had proved fatal to many a bottle. He had smashed innumerable things in combats with visionary Macduffs, and there was no rearward spot of him which

he had not bruised by the practice of artistic back-falls. His indentures solemnly prohibited him from drinking, gambling, or the frequenting of the theatre, but the last was the only thing he cared for. To know an actor was to achieve eminence—was in itself an education. He haunted stage doors, therefore, and was profuse in friendship to such of the smaller fry as would admit his intimacy; and at last things came to such a pitch with him that he desperately volunteered as super at a new theatre, gained an engagement at a salary of ten shillings a week, and going back to business next day caught his employer, and begged him to cancel his indentures and let him go. The apprentice's natural guardians having deceased some years before, leaving him a small annuity, there was nobody but master and apprentice to consult. The employer, counting his own interest as much as Bob's desire, consented to liberate him on condition that he held his place until a new assistant could be found.

The day came at last when Bob should be released from servitude.

'So you've quite made up your mind to make a fool of yourself, have you?' asked the meagre and saturnine employer.

'No, I haven't,' said Bob; 'but I'm going, if you'll let me have my indentures.'

'You can have 'em to-night,' said the surgeon. 'The new assistant will be here at six. Don't smash anything in the meantime, if you please.'

Bob, left to himself, rehearsed Mark Antony's oration, and had just got prosperously to 'the stones of Rome,' which he was wont to deliver with a yell, when a lady entered the shop. The embryo tragedian subdued his soul, blushed a little at detection, spread his hands upon the counter in imitation of the business manner, and asked with what he could supply his customer.

'I have a large and dangerous dog,' said the lady, who was thickly veiled, 'and I am compelled to kill it. I want something which will kill it swiftly and without pain.'

'Prussic acid, ma'am?' asked Robert.

'That will do, I dare say,' said the lady gently. 'Let me have enough to put it out of pain at once.'

'Is it a male dog, ma'am?' asked Robert, with an air of wisdom.

'Yes,' the lady answered.

'Have you a bottle?' the sapient Robert next inquired.

'No,' said the lady, taking from the counter a ruby-coloured vinaigrette of curious shape, with a pearl-coloured stopper. 'Let me have it in this. Give me enough, if you please.'

There was no Poisons Act in those days, and Bob Thwaite was a fool. He took the vinaigrette, and, having a wholesome dread of poisons on his own account, held it from his nose whilst he poured out enough to have killed a hundred dogs. Then, with a great show of business-like capacity, he stoppered the bottle, wrapped it up in stiff white paper, demanded ten and sixpence for it at a venture, received the money, and bowed his visitor out with a wise caution to be very careful of the poison. Ten minutes later his employer returned.

‘Any business?’ he inquired.

‘Ten and six,’ said Robert proudly.

‘That’s better,’ said the surgeon drearily. ‘What did you sell?’

‘Vinaigrette and mixture,’ said Bob, not being quite at home in poisons.

‘What’s that smell of bitter almonds?’ asked the surgeon, sniffing. ‘Have you been meddling with the prussic acid?’

‘I sold some,’ Bob returned, defiantly.

‘How much?’ asked his master.

‘Half a tablespoonful—not more,’ said Bob, and stood frozen suddenly at the cry of rage and fear which issued from his master’s lips.

‘You idiot! you madman! you fool! You’ve sold enough to kill a village. My God!’ cried the surgeon, loosing Bob and taking his own grey wisps of hair in both hands. ‘It’s making murder easy to leave you for a minute. Who bought it?’

‘A lady,’ said the horrified assistant.

‘Who was she?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Bob fatuously. ‘She was a lady. She wanted to kill a dog. She was quite a lady.’

The surgeon groaned.

‘If there’s murder done in London by prussic acid, you’re the murderer. Get out of my shop, and never let me see your face again. Oh, you fool! It’s well you’re going somewhere where you can’t poison people wholesale. Get out of my shop!’

Bob went his way trembling, but in an hour’s time he had reassured himself, and was rather glad to be away. A rehearsal had been called for that afternoon, and this gave him opportunity to attend it. He walked to the theatre, and beheld with eyes of pride the bills which announced—‘Monday Next. “Kismet,” a New Tragedy by Montague Tucket, Esq. Great Attractions. Grand Double Engagement. Miss Galbraith, Miss Ray.’ His own part was not scored, but he shared somehow in the fame of the great actresses, and his bosom heaved with pride. When he entered at

the stage door he felt as proud as if he had been a conquering general returning from being out-manceuvred by an African savage, and received with plaudits by a discerning multitude. The superior cut of his clothes procured him an unexpected honour. He was actually deputed to carry a letter on a salver on to the stage, and he was rehearsed in advancing, bowing, and retiring. He had also to shout in a crowd, and to march as one of an Eastern guard.

The principals were not present at this rehearsal, and Bob went away a little disappointed at not having already trod the same boards with Miss Galbraith and Miss Ray. He attended daily, and each morning he searched the newspapers for a dreadful murder, and finding news of none grew more assured than ever that no mischance had befallen through him. But on the last day of rehearsal a veiled figure emerged from the stage door as he was about to enter it, and he recognised, or thought he recognised, the purchaser.

‘Who’s that?’ he asked the doorkeeper.

‘That’s Miss Galbraith,’ the man responded. ‘And she’s a Tartar. Don’t you make any mistakes if you’ve got anything to do along of her.’

Bob went to his business, and thought no more about it, being absorbed in delicious anticipation of his own *début*. The fateful night arrived, and a house packed from roof to ceiling awaited the appearance of the rival queens. It was known pretty generally that Miss Galbraith had accepted an engagement to play here chiefly that she might crush her rival, and Miss Galbraith’s admirers expected to see superb acting. Miss Ray’s admirers looked for fine acting too, and the general expectation was wound to a high pitch. The night seemed a revival of old stage times, and awoke traditions in the minds of elderly playgoers. The play, which was written in blank verse, turned chiefly upon the rivalry of two women for one man—a theme old enough, but fairly handled. Now and then the audience caught at lines which seemed to indicate the actual rivalry between the actresses, and applauded highly.

Bob Thwaite, to whom just then everything was nothing if it did not affect him, had smuggled himself into the flies opposite the prompter, and there, secreted in semi-darkness, surveyed a scrap of the house, and waited eagerly for the time of his own appearance. In due order it came, and he advanced and bowed and retired, feeling wondrous shaky about the legs and dizzy as to the head. No manifestation of popular delight hailed his appearance, and he felt hurt and half disillusionised without knowing why. Then he shouted in the crowd and marched in the Eastern guard,

and his duties were over. He went back to his place opposite the prompter and watched the last act of the play. Elvira, the captured Italian, was about to poison the fair Amina, the Circassian princess, her rival. The leech had left a draught upon the fair Amina's table, and Amina herself being absent, Elvira's crime found opportunity for execution.

The stage was dark, and like a wraith the great tragic actress floated on the scene. Her deep voice throbbed through the air, and listeners held their breath. She had never played so greatly, and Amina was but a poor shadow by the side of this inspired and terrible woman. All passion seemed compressed within the voice that knocked at every heart.

Within this little phial lurks the spell  
To end all rivalry.

If such a flame  
As burns within my soul could rise in hers,  
And lighten up to where Love sits and reigns,  
The God himself might well descend and breathe  
Upon the phial, making poison wholesome  
To his true worshipper.

If she could love,  
I could not find the heart to poison her.  
An ugly word! An ugly deed! But Love,  
Whose name she hath blasphemed in taking it,  
Be thou my quittance as thou art my guide!  
There! There! Be quick, good poison, with thy work,  
That she may suffer little! She is here.

The table on which the draught was set was close to the listener's place, and, gliding round it, Inez passed him, brushing his hand with hers. He was awed already by the terror of her acting, and her icy hand made him creep. And there was a horror on him for which mere acting could have found no reason—a crawling, terrible fear that held him spell-bound. He knew the phial from which the wicked potion had been poured, and there was something so real in the voice he had heard and the face he had seen, that he shook from head to foot with dread. The lights rose slowly, as the doomed unconscious beauty entered. A faint breath of air fanned itself sleepily across the stage, and bore with it a scent of bitter almonds. Amina took up the draught, and the watcher—the one creature in the crowded house who saw the real tragedy—dashed recklessly forward, forgetting everything but his own agony, and tore the potion from her hands.

'Poison!' he gasped, 'real poison!' and with that he fell and the glass went to pieces.

The unthinking galleries burst into loud applause, but the

main body of spectators sat amazed or doubtful. Excited voices called beyond the flies and behind the scenes, the curtain fell, and the house filled with a confusion of tongues.

‘It was poison,’ proclaimed the miserable assistant. ‘I sold it. Prussic acid. It was real poison.’

There was a sudden fear in every mind. The manager looked round for Inez, but she alone was absent from the crowded stage. He ran wildly to her room, and beat upon the door. It was locked, and there came no answer. Others came to his aid, and they forced the door. She lay there dead with the ruby phial in her hands, and there was an odour of bitter almonds in the room.

Men’s minds were full of guesses, but none hit the truth, and neither Gabriel nor Mary ever knew it. After that terrible night, Mary appeared no more upon the stage. Monsieur Paul appeared, and with much show of grief administered to his wife’s effects, and then went out of sight. The great tragic actress was buried obscurely and in darkness, and people in time forgot to speak of her, and her tragedy was no more remembered.

*(The End.)*



## Boar-Hunting in the Ardennes.

I WILL not tell you my actual whereabouts in this delightful country, for an obvious selfish reason. Honestly, and with no exaggeration, I believe it to be the most charming primitive place in Europe, and I do not choose that my advertisement of its beauties should add by one to the little crowd of admiring tourists which dribbles through it in the summer-time. There are already indications enough of its approaching fall into popularity with the tourist tribe. The railway has run out a branch from the great Brussels and Luxembourg line within the last fourteen months, and the inhabitants of the village are already talking of a Kursaal to be built in the place of the modest little Kiosque du Parc in which at present a travelling band of choristers sings once a year. We lie in a gentle valley (one of many, for the land is all rolled and crumpled into soft hills and dimpled vales), and the slopes which shelter us from the outer world are richly wooded. At the moment at which I write the woods are in the fulness of their autumn glory, and the long level sunlight smites the hillside on which my window looks into unfancied splendours of gold and crimson and russet and purple, mingled with the deep, deep green of the unchanging firs. At a season when London is all murky and foggy and rainy, we have had two days' rain here in six weeks, and old inhabitants prophesy a bright November. I am not a misanthrope or a hater of my kind, but, with something of that inborn human selfishness which makes one's fireside-shiver on a wintry night a thing of joy, I reflect on the fact that there is no other Londoner within miles of me.

When you walk out in this delightful country, and the solemn splendour of the woods draws you up the hillside through long empurpled vistas, you find views which for quiet charm are not easily to be rivalled. There are no Alpine heights to impress you with a sense of your own smallness—a wholesome thing enough, at times, no doubt—but you can get an honest appetite and a reasonable bracing of the muscles out of our average ascent. And when the ascent is made you can see about you for many miles gentle wood-clothed hills, and vales of deeper forest where no woodman's axe resounds. These far-reaching woods are the home of big game, antlered deer and tusky boar, and the Garde Général-Champêtre, after a six months' acquaintance, had grown to be a crony of mine, and offered me rare sport for the autumn

and winter-time. Now, outside my profession as a writer of fiction, I have never killed anybody or anything, though within that *demesne* I can upon occasion be as bloodthirsty as my neighbours; but I am an Englishman, and therefore a keen sportsman to Continental notions. I know at which end a gun goes off, and I am even a decent hand at a rifle and a target, having been put through a musketry course in Her Majesty's service years ago. So, not being oppressed by any such fears as assailed the long gamekeeper in the presence of Mr. Winkle, I set out one glorious morning rather more than a month ago with a borrowed double-barrelled smooth-bore, carried sportsmanlike under my arm, to hunt the grisly boar in companionship with a dozen sportsmen true and tried, commanded by and subservient to (though we had a baron and one or two other local swells among our company) the *Garde-Général*. He, with a finger at his nose to mark a sort of confidence in the statement, sent round a whisper that one of his henchmen had brought news of the presence of the *sanglier* in a certain belt of forest six *kilomètres* distant, and with high hope we marched thither through the glorious lanes, where summer's full-flushed foliage had begun, ever so little, to incline to gold. The great belts of wood on either hand were silent. Not one solitary chirp sounded from the leafy screen, and that seemed and still seems something of a pity. But the Belgian sportsman, like his French confrère, is death to little birds. I heard last week, for instance, of one bold gentleman who shot twenty-one larks for his day's sport, hiding in a thicket and enticing the poor things with the flash of a mirror which was laid upon the grass. And at this time of the year we eat thrushes twice a day—a deadly shame—and very plump and tender and well-flavoured they are, the little French emigrants.

When we had reached the spot appointed, we all sat down to await the beaters. Probably acting on the principle of the bridegroom who refused to haste to the wedding because it couldn't begin without him, the beaters kept us waiting for an hour. They were a picturesque and odd-looking lot when they came. There were one or two pairs of *sabots* amongst them, but for the most part they were heavily booted in leather. All wore blue blouses and trousers parti-coloured with patches, as a testimonial to the thrift and care of Belgian wives. They all smoked porcelain or *meerscham* pipes and carried thick sticks, and every man of them wore the ridiculous stiffly-upright cap of the country. They had one or two dogs amongst them, one of unknown breed, who looked uncommonly like a sheep, and certainly went on legs of mutton as to his hinder part; a turnspit, with ample room for a third pair of

legs in the middle of him ; and another, half spaniel, half terrier, and all mongrel. The Garde-Général, with a finger at his nose, went round the sportsmen, and in strict confidence disposed of each ; one to this post, one to that other, as if the places were state secrets. Then the beaters having been started up one sylvan road and down another, we all got stationed at our various posts and waited. I kept guard at the end of a lovely alley at the forest's edge, and, looking along the sylvan road to the right, could just make out the figure of the Juge de Paix between the tree trunks fifty yards off. Far and far away, after a long wait, we heard the voices of the beaters and the barking of the nondescript dogs. The Garde, passing with a hurried step to his own post, paused with a finger at his nose once more for a last word of caution. 'Fire at nothing but the wild boar or the fox.' They shoot foxes in this part of the world, then ? I felt as if I had a commission to kill a baby, and resolved that Reynard should go free for me. I struggled against my superstition, vainly. I could not find the heart to think of myself in the act of shooting a fox. There are men at home whom I could never face with a quiet soul after the committal of such a crime.

There is something in waiting for big game to break cover which imparts a sort of electric feel to a gun-barrel. It is less as if your own nerves tingled, than as if the cold iron had suddenly discovered nerves of its own. The stillness of the wood (except for the faint and far-off cries of the beaters) was a thing to wonder at. Blazing sunshine on the sylvan road, slant lines of arrowy light within the wood, not a breath of air, not a rustle of a single leaf, not the chirp of a grasshopper or twitter of a bird, or even the hum of a gnat. Dead silence near at hand, and only that far-off halloo to give sign of any life within a hundred miles. The halloo coming nearer by slow degrees, and the gun-barrel growing more and more electric. Suddenly on my listening ear there breaks a sound as of a heavy body forcing its way through the dense brushwood. I cock both barrels and kneel to make my aim the surer. If it should turn out a deer I am forbidden to fire, and I must wait until the object declares itself fully. The crackling grows nearer. I can already tell the very spot at which it will break, and I hear a voice, a voice of joy to me, an emphatic grunt, like that of the domestic porker in his drowsy hour of after-dinner contemplation. 'Ugh ! ugh !' And then the crackling noise again. Now for it ! There breaks upon my vision a fat and middle-aged gentleman, who fans himself with his broad-brimmed straw hat, grunting at the heat and effort of the way at every foot-step. 'Bon jour, m'sieur,' says the fat and middle-aged one.

politely, as he passes. He disappears into the sombre wood on the other side the alley. If a boar had come that way within the next five minutes, he would have found my post unguarded. The revulsion was too much; and when the beaters came up after beating unsuccessfully, I was found sitting on the turf with my back against a tree, helpless and tearful and breathless with laughter. I am conscious that it is nothing in the telling, but my sides have ached over it.

The beaters and the nondescript dogs being again despatched by diverse routes, the Garde, with an aspect more knowing than before, and twice as confidential, passed from one to another of his band, and, with his finger at his nose to mark anew the secrecy of the proceeding, told off each to a new post. Once more we found ourselves, after a quarter of an hour's tramp, ranged round a dense wood, and once again the far-off voices of the beaters rose and drew slowly nearer, and once more we came away without a sight of bristle, fur, or feather. 'Il ne va pas,' said the Garde sadly, and we all sat down to smoke. Then I heard such stories of past big bags that all wonder at the barrenness of the forest vanished. But every man there being assured in his own mind that the place swarmed with boar and deer and fox, my hopes revived, and our interval of rest being over, away we trudged again to new posts, to go through the old programme of waiting with the old result. Then we came home, comfortably tired, and sat down to a table-d'hôte dinner purposely delayed for us. The hotel people politely feigned prodigious surprise at our want of good fortune, and did it so naturally that I began to think a blank day hitherto unheard of.

Business took me to England for a week or two, and when I got back one of the first objects I beheld was the undoubted head of a wild boar, splendidly tusked—a trophy of a chase I had missed. He had fallen to the Garde's own gun, and had taken five bullets, charging with great gallantry to receive the last, and falling in quite an appropriate and befitting manner to expire at his conqueror's feet. I ate a part of the conquered, and have no high opinion of him. It befell a day or two thereafter that a small Belgian boy, wandering in the woods, was frightened almost out of his wits by the sight of a herd of boar, numerous (if the small boy were believable) as Laban's flocks. Without troubling the *tracqueurs* this time, the Garde hastily formed a party for the morrow, and in the dewy calm of an October morning we set out again. We had an addition to our party that morning, in the shape of a young gentleman whose form, features, and costume are made familiar to the civilised world four months of every year on the front page of the '*Journal pour Rire*.' He wore a small

hat of whitish felt, with a down-turned brim. A pigeon's wing was stuck gaily in the band. His coat and waistcoat, of thickly ribbed brown velveteen, were profusely besprinkled with bronze buttons, bearing in high relief the device of a horse's head. His trousers were of blue, a heavenly blue, and he wore leggings and boots of unblackened leather. The heavily fringed game-bag, dear to the Parisian sportsman, depended from his shoulder, and fitted jauntily on his shapely waist. Being questioned somewhat sardonically by the justice of the peace as to whether he meant to carry home a boar in this contrivance, he answered affably that it was *chic* to wear it. In the course of a month's residence in London, this young gentleman had picked up half a dozen of our most familiar locutions and about as many catch-words and refrains of popular songs, which he quoted with genial irrelevance. Socially considered, he was a decided acquisition to our party, but he could hardly be said to increase our chances of sport, and he continually scandalised our leader throughout the day by ill-timed indulgence in dance and song. He was accompanied, in spite of the Garde's objections, by a dog, a beast bearing about as much resemblance to the English setter as his owner to the English sportsman. This brute in all his mis-spent life had probably never seen a spinney until now, but his owner was prepared to stake his reputation as a sportsman upon his dog's virtues, and as an Englishman I was appealed to as to whether the animal was or was not a 'settare' of the true British breed. I responded cautiously that he was of the proper colour, and the overfed asthmatic and degenerate beast was noisily caressed and encouraged on the strength of this testimonial. Throughout the day the 'settare' lost himself in the undergrowth 'once in each quarter of an hour. His master yelled and whistled, and fired his gun to recall him, and when the brute came wheezing up, he was received with noisy demonstrations of affection.

There were only half a dozen of us, and we entered the forest from a road cut through it, and made our way as straight on as we could, at an interval of perhaps forty yards from each other. It was warm work, though the year was getting old, and the morning air was keen and invigorating. There was no track to follow, and the branches of the lower trees and shrubs were so knitted together as to be quite impenetrable in places. Immediately in my rear came a pale-faced youth, newly imported from the modern Babylon—a youth in pince-nez, who had in vain striven to borrow a gun from his Parisian friend. A casual inquiry on his part made me rejoice at his failure. On the chance of a snap at a hare on the road, I had up to that time carried a shot cartridge in my right barrel. Before entering the wood I exchanged this for a

ball, and the pale-faced youth stretched forth an innocent hand for the rejected cartridge as I returned it to my pocket, and asked 'What's that?' He requested me afterwards to lock and unlock the breech, and said that the process seemed admirably simple and easy. He remarked later on that he had always felt an interest in fire-arms, and he seemed pleased to have seen a gun so near. Except for our footsteps and the occasional song and shout of our Parisian friend, we were in the midst of a dead silence, and suddenly, as we stood still to breathe, we heard distinctly the hoarse grunt of our quarry. The spot was likely enough to look at. We had reached a green division in the forest where rankly grassed slopes ran downwards to a marshy brook, and about the damp earth afterwards we found ample traces of the wild pigs' recent presence. The hoarse grunt sounded again, but nothing was visible, and no other sound occurred to guide us. By this time we had lost both sight and hearing of the rest of our company. We stood still, all eyes and ears, and suddenly in our rear there was a panting rush, and that beast of a dog came careering along with his tongue lolling and his asthmatic wheeze sounding like a death rattle. Almost at that second there was a shot and a loud cry from the Garde, who had stealthily and silently stalked to within twenty yards of us. 'Par ici!' yelled the Garde, and we dashed in the direction of the voice. The son of the woods had his finger to his nose when we came up with him. What was it? we demanded. A boar! Had he hit him? He believed so. Yes. Here was his track plainly to be seen in the long grass, and when a score of yards had been traced, there was blood upon it. We ran along upon the easy track for a hundred yards or so, and then lost it on the shed leaves and in the tangled undergrowth. Uncas or Pathfinder might have followed it, but we had neither of them there, and after hunting about ineffectually for a long time in the attempt to recover it, we abandoned it reluctantly, and having fired a shot or two to attract our companions, sat down to await their arrival. In the meantime the Garde, always with a finger to his nose, matured and set forth a plan. Two of us were to stay at that spot, and the other four sportsmen were to beat up towards us, from the far end of the wood. No sooner had the others arrived, than, with a request to our Parisian friend to stay with the pale-faced amateur and myself, and a brief injunction to us both to keep a good look-out, he led off his party. In a minute he was back again with an expression of deep seriousness on his ruddy and friendly face. If the wounded boar should turn that way, he would be dangerous. Caution and coolness, then. 'Ole ze forte, for 'e is coming!' sang the Parisian with joyful gesture. 'Ah!'

said the Garde sardonically; 'où avez-vous étudié l'anglais?' 'En Chine,' responded the gay Parisian with a flourish of the untanned boots. There was a general laugh at this, and the Garde commanded silence with the unfailing finger at his nose, and led the way again. We waited while the sun wheeled slowly up the overhanging arch of steely blue, and shot long pencils of light through the yet dense mass of autumn foliage. A light mist curled through the wood until it reached the high lines of leafage, and then faded in the radiant tranquillity of the upper air. The thick-leaved trees, glorious with brown and green and purple mosses, forbore the faintest rustle, and no thrill of song or flap of wing broke the almost deathlike stillness. The Parisian for a while beguiled the time with song—'Ee loaf 'er, ee loaf 'er, 'tis al zat ee can say,' but even he grew quiet after the first five minutes, and the cold iron began to grow electric again within my fingers. Silence for ten minutes, for fifteen, for twenty. The electric thrill had gone and come again, and gone again, and a tranquil idle lassitude succeeded. The place we stood in was like a landscape-painter's dream. The full flush and bloom of summer was as yet only ripened and enriched by the hand of autumn, and whichever way you might look, there were exquisite vistas, each one of them a picture full of sweet form and strong yet delicate colouring.

A rustle somewhere in the brushwood near at hand, and all notions of landscape beauty swept clean away. A low whistle—the appointed signal of the coming of our friends, lest any flurried sportsman should fire at a mere sound—and tranquillity returns, with something of disappointment. Then the stalwart form of the Justice of the Peace heaves in sight. 'Est-ce que vous n'avez vu rien?' he cried. 'Ri—' began the Parisian, but the last syllable died upon his tongue, and he threw his gun to his shoulder and fired. There rose such a squeal as haunted the dreams of the butcher's daughter in Holmes's touching verse, and out from the undergrowth into the open dashed a great brown mass within ten yards of us, heading straight for the musical Frenchman. The brown mass was almost on him when he leapt nimbly on one side, and swinging round discharged the second barrel without effect. Piggy's rush, for he was here at last, had carried him twenty paces beyond his object when he turned again. Just as he turned, the judge and I fired together, and the great brute staggered and dashed on once more. Then came another shot, and the boar spun clean round like a teetotum and dropped. The gay Parisian ran forward, but the Garde's voice cried—'Au large!' and the warning was not misplaced. The life was not out of our quarry yet. He

rose and made another rush, but this time three shots met him, and when he fell again he was still enough in all conscience.

We left him there, and marched forth from the wood and struck the road, along which we continued until we came to a little auberge where we told our news, and secured bearers for the dead. A very sprightly old lady keeps this auberge, and while we sat sipping at Dinant beer and pulling at our pipes with a quite heroic air upon us all, the sprightly old lady told a story. Yesterday, said the sprightly old lady, she was cleaning her door-step at about half-past five in the morning, when she suddenly espied a sanglier walking leisurely up the road. He had evidently been out for a night's ramble in the cultivated fields, possibly in hope of a discovery of turnips or potatoes. Anyhow, there he was; and the old lady calling her husband and her son, the three armed themselves with pitchforks and intercepted his passage. And between them they slew him, and there was his body lying in a hut outside to prove the story, a body pierced with many wounds.

'Mais, madame,' said the Garde, 'c'est du braconnage.' But what, asked the sprightly old lady, were poor folks to do? If the nasty things were ringed in the nose like the domestic porker, there might be a chance for poor folks' gardens; but as it was—There an appealing shrug of the shoulders and a still more appealing extension of the hands ended the address. 'Eh bien,' said the Justice of the Peace, 'n'en dis rien.' The Garde shook his head with great gravity, and talked about the divine right of kings. The particular forests hereabouts belong to Leopold the Second. The sprightly old lady urged that the sanglier had been found on the high road, and not in the forest: surely he was anybody's property there! 'Eh bien,' said the Justice of the Peace again, 'n'en dis rien;' and eventually his advice was taken.

Then a cart being brought up, and the bearers of our slain one arriving, the body of the boar was hoisted in and we set out in triumph. The scene at the hotel was one to be remembered. A crowd of at least a score of people surrounded the vehicle; the gendarme was under arms, and came out to look on. The cook brandished a rolling-pin about the prostrate giant of the forest, and prophesied rare dishes out of him, and the sportsmen's wives received the sportsmen as if they had just returned from the successful storming of a Malakoff. I thought of the sprightly old lady at the auberge, and her son and husband armed with pitchforks, but that was a thing to be silent over.



## Rambles round Harrow.

### VI.

SHOULD it ever be my good fortune to get the ear of Mr. Cook or Mr. Gaze, I shall urge upon them to advertise as a great attraction, and I fear I must add novelty, a few trips into Middlesex. A most attractive programme might be issued, wherein the expedition would compare favourably with others into foreign lands: no sea-voyage—English spoken everywhere, which is perhaps more than could be said of some counties—and so the translator, who is often a great deal fagged, I fancy, at the end of the day, could be dispensed with. In his place a local antiquary could with great advantage be installed, who would expatiate upon church monuments, and upon old farms, and halls that had seen more stirring times, and figured, however humbly, in the country's history.

One difficulty at the outset might present itself, but that, under the skilful management of either of the contractors that have been named, would soon disappear. The Continental hotels are so accustomed to visitors from all parts of the world, especially England, that the commissariat is in perfect working order; but in even the most charming parts of Middlesex an excursionist is so rare a sight, that the long-forgotten arts of the landlord of the inn (a word one much prefers to 'hotel') would be sorely taxed by the apparition of visitors. Still, I am sure the hosts would not be found wanting, nor would they prove unworthy of their ancestors.

I was surprised to find how many Londoners there were to whom scenery is not a matter of indifference who never saw the beautiful lanes that lead from Kingsbury past Wembley Park, and through Preston on to Kenton, and through Kingsbury Green to the Welsh Harp; of course, many have taken their walks in this direction, but there are many who are quite ignorant of the delights of this charming country. Yet Kingsbury cannot be more than six miles from Paddington, and if a very short ride is taken on the rails, it may be approached within a mile or two from several parts of London. There is a church here which was originally built of Roman bricks: Dr. Stukely thinks it has been built from the ruins of Verulam, but Mr. Gale thinks the Roman bricks which he measured, and which we should call tiles, were from Villa Regia, from which residence it is said Kingsbury took its name. This locality may offer some interest to Harrovians from the circumstance that John Lyon, the sturdy yeoman who founded Harrow, had property

here, and made the following provision in his 'statutes' and in his will. The governors are to 'see and provide that tenn loads of wood, that is to say, six good loads of lath bavines, and four good loads of tall wood, shall yearly be brought into ye school-house from his lands at Kingsbury, to and for ye common use of ye scholars of ye said school.'—Dr. Goldsmith lodged here, and here he wrote his work on natural history; the great poet being actuated, it is supposed, by a belief that he knew something of the subject. An amusing anecdote appears in Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' from which it would seem that the celebrated chronicler called on Goldsmith, and finding that he was out, he went up to his room; 'having a curiosity,' as Mr. Boswell simply said, 'to see his apartment, we went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals scrawled on the walls with a black-lead pencil.'

Perhaps the north-eastern part of the county is almost more untravelled, and if we simply take the district that lies between South Mims and Waltham Cross (which is only just over the Middlesex frontier), Ponders End, and Chipping Barnet, we shall find old churches, lanes, and landscapes that we could hardly believe were near the metropolis. If, however, we turn to the west side of Middlesex, we shall meet with even more interesting scenes. Rickmansworth, it is true, is just beyond the boundary of the county, but a very short walk will bring us into Middlesex again, and then there is a walk of great beauty to Uxbridge through Harefield, which extends over seven milestones, and is literally full of interest, and abounds with historical associations. The grand prospect that meets us after passing Harefield will be noticed, but I was struck with the absence of pedestrians, and even of vehicles. Now, though these lines are written in Cheshire, and within a moderate reach of Shropshire, Flint, and Denbigh—counties that suggest every variety of beauty—I am bound to admit that there is nothing near Chester to equal the view from Harefield. Of course these remarks are sadly cramped from the fact that they only pertain to one county, and that—all but one—the smallest in England. This is a subject on which one could almost grow discursive; but if nearly every form of rural delight can be found in a county that contains only 282 square miles, or which is equal to about the eighth part of Norfolk, and if we remember that out of this the vast metropolis and its vast suburbs are to be carved,—forming in all, perhaps, the largest city in the world,—it will be seen what untravelled delights there must be in every other county in England. Year by year, of course, the denizens of London extend themselves in all directions into the country, and take up parks and fields; but for all that, the rural districts of Middlesex are still

fresh and fair, and indeed we may in one sense owe much to rail-roads for being able to enjoy rusticity so near home; they sweep past them, and convey their freight to more distant settlements in Kent or Essex or Hertfordshire.

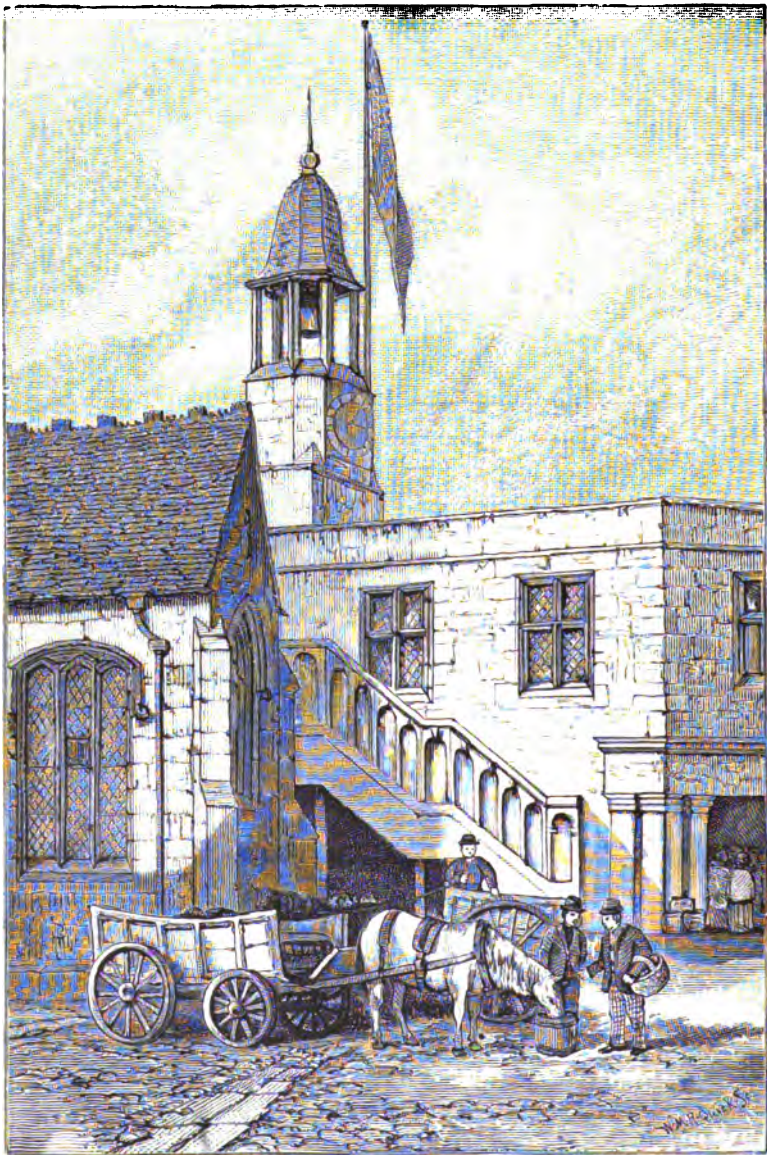
The road from Rickmansworth to Uxbridge is about nine miles in length, and is full of sylvan beauty. There are not a few quaint gabled farm-houses and broad spreading beeches before we reach Harefield, but it is only after passing Harefield that the beauty of the road begins. Harefield itself is a perfect model of an old English village of large size. The parish occupies the north-west angle of Middlesex county. At the Norman survey the Manor was called Herefelle, which in Saxon is the Hare-field. There were some singular entries in the survey; such as two mills valued at fifteen shillings, and four fish-ponds producing a thousand eels. On Harefield moor there are still some ponds called the fishery ponds, and it is not impossible that the name may have remained with them till now. A glance at the old estimated returns will show how the parish fell off in value, as did others, after the Conquest. In Edward the Confessor's time it was estimated at 14*l.*, but in William's reign 8*l.* was all the return it gave. It may be curious to remark, as an instance of how lands sometimes changed hands, that at one time Harefield belonged to the family of Newdegate, and remained in their possession from the reign of Edward III. till Elizabeth, when it was exchanged for Arbury in Warwickshire, and this is now the seat of the genial member for North Warwickshire. Harefield passed through several hands, including those of Sir Thomas Egerton, the keeper of the great seal, and Lord Chandos, until it again reverted to the family of Newdegate through Sir Richard Newdegate, who purchased it back again; and Lysons in his '*Middlesex Parishes*' mentions this as the only instance in all Middlesex in which he has been able to trace back possession to so remote a date. The Newdegate who repurchased it was a grandson of the one that sold it. Near Harefield Park were the works of George Spedding, built in 1803, and here the copper bolts were made for the Royal navy during the French wars. The village of Harefield is scattered round a very large green, and consists of pleasant cottages, village houses, and shops. In the middle of this green formerly stood a May-pole, which indeed was there till comparatively lately; and there is the typical pond, where cattle may be seen at midsummer, deep in the water, cooling themselves from the sun, and lazily lashing off the green flies as they settle on their sides. Shortly after passing Harefield we come to some picturesque ancient almshouses built by Alice, Countess of Derby. They were to accommodate six poor widows, who received 5*l.* each and

11. each for repairs. Before we arrive at the almshouses a magnificent prospect opens up and continues for nearly an hour's walk. Middlesex, Hertford, and Buckingham are rolled out like a map at our feet, and on the left-hand side, in the park of Harefield Place, is an ancient church with a low embattled tower such as is peculiar to this part of the country. The church is of the fourteenth century, and literally nestles in great elm-trees, which we look down upon from above. The road continues very beautiful till we arrive at the sign-post which points to the roads which lead to Denham, Langley Marsh, Slough, and Windsor, and then the view is shut out by high thorn hedges that are none the less picturesque from the fact of their generally being in want of pruning. In places these seem almost to be choked with the beautiful yet parasitic bind-weed, whose winding roots cling to those of the thorns, and with wild roses and blackberries; and the lane here is planted on each side with elms and poplars. Harefield church consists of a chancel, nave, and two aisles, with a south chapel called the Brackenbury Chapel, which contains ancient monuments of the Newdegate family. On the east wall is a monument with a long Latin inscription to Sir Richard Newdegate, Bart., who died in 1678. A singular event in his life may be noticed here. Cromwell had removed nearly all the judges on the bench, in consequence of their attachment to the Royal cause; and casting about for proper successors, he very naturally selected Newdegate, who was then a sergeant at law, and paid him the high compliment of offering him a judgeship. It is said that Newdegate, perhaps coquettishly, declined, for it must be remembered that in those days a counsel's fees were less, and not, as is often now the case, much more than a judge's pay; and Cromwell replied: 'Well, if you gentlemen of the red robes will not execute the laws, my red coats shall,' and the '*nolo episcopari*' was gracefully sunk by Sergeant Newdegate. He seems, however, to have lost his high office by deciding in the case of Col. Halsey and other cavaliers of York that, though it was treason to levy war against a king, he could not find that the law affected those who levied war against a Lord Protector; and we may depend upon it that when this sophistry was communicated to Cromwell, he very soon was practising at the bar again. The church is full of monuments to the Newdegate family, and they are for the most part of very considerable beauty. One to Lady Newdegate is by Grinling Gibbons. The one to Alice, Countess-Dowager of Derby, who died in 1637, occupies the south-east corner of the chancel. She was married first to Ferdinando, Earl of Derby, who is said to have been poisoned in 1594, and afterwards to Lord Keeper Ellesmere. This monument

is very costly and gorgeous ; but quite a work might be written on the monuments of this interesting church, and the historical associations connected with them. From Harefield, if we look towards Harrow, we shall see some extensive forest lands, at Clayton, Bayhurst, and Ruislip, which is remarkable for the number of ways in which it is spelt ; some have written it Rouslip in records, some Ruslip, and one enterprising scribe has gone so far as to spell it Rushellype.

We are now in decidedly the quietest part of Middlesex, and no part of Nottingham or Northampton could give us a more complete picture of rural seclusion. If you cross along a foot-path, it is quite common to startle a hare or raise a covey of partridges ; and a velveteen-coated keeper is not at all out of keeping with everything, as he passes by with a gun under his arm, his dog following, and, having thoroughly satisfied himself that you have no nets or gins in your coat pocket, touches his hat as a sort of apology for the keenness of his scrutiny. The roads, which are very good from Rickmansworth to Uxbridge, become broader as we reach the town, and they are more elaborately finished with foot-walks and curb-stones and macadam. One thing which strikes a stranger as he enters the country town is the size and importance of the houses, which extend for a considerable distance along the principal street, and are like the residences of wealthy London merchants. It is not apparent why they are here, for they must have been built long before the time of railways, and when nobody in business in London would think of coming so far to live. In remarking on these houses in 1816, Mr. Brewer partly accounts for them by saying, 'This town derives considerable advantages of trade from its weekly market, and from the numerous family seats in the neighbourhood. In addition to these favourable circumstances, the situation of Uxbridge on the road to Oxford and Gloucester and Milford-haven is productive of much benefit to the inhabitants, while it imparts a constant air of bustle and vivacity to the main thoroughfare.' If to these sources of income we add the mills that have for so long been at the extremity of the town, we may in part account for some of the large old dwellings. In Speed's catalogue of religious houses, he mentions a monastery here dedicated to St. Mary, but Dugdale gives no account of it, and Lysons says he has been unable to discover any other mention of it. Leland saw Uxbridge in the time of Henry VIII., and his description conveys a perfect picture of the old class of country town, of which we may yet see so many traces left in Chester, Shrewsbury, and Warwick, with the great timbered gables and heavy breast-beams quaintly carved, and





*Market Place, Uxbridge.*







speaking so loudly of a picturesque outside and comfortable rooms inside. 'In it is but one long street, but that for timber well builded. There is a celebrated market here once a week, and a great fayre on the feast-day of St. Michael. There be two wooden bridges at the west end of the towne, and under the more west goeth the great arm of Colne river. The lesser arm goeth under the other bridge, and each of them serveth to turn a greate mille.' What would a lover of the picturesque give to see Uxbridge as it was when Leyland saw it? The black and white mill houses, the undershot wheels, and the wooden bridge, like some of those almost too picturesque ones we meet with in the remoter parts of Germany, make one feel almost a pang to think that such things have passed away. A few of the old houses are still left, but they are rapidly disappearing.

The quaint market-place is built of brick, and was constructed in 1789. The staircase shown outside leads to schoolrooms, and was originally intended also for grain dépôts. Everything seems to be out of right angles at this part of Uxbridge, and the chancel of the church comes quaintly in. Both Brewer and Lysons speak of Uxbridge church as a commonplace building, in the 'pointed style,' as Brewer says, and 'destitute of the imposing beauty which that mode of building is capable of producing.' I confess, however, that I saw it before I had read the remarks of either author, and was struck with the venerable appearance and the quiet unobtrusive way in which it was adapted to the irregularities of the site. Inside Uxbridge church are some very old monuments; one on the north side of the chancel is to the memory of *Dame Leonora Bennet*, who died in 1638. She is represented in a recumbent posture; and in front of the table part of the monument is a circular piece of sculpture, with an iron grating, intended to describe the aperture of a charnel-house.

The date of Uxbridge church seems to be the middle of the fifteenth century, and this would almost correspond with the record that in 1447 Robert Oliver and other inhabitants founded a guild in the chapel of St. Margaret at Uxbridge.

At the extreme end of Uxbridge, to the north-west, is a very beautiful corn mill, which is on the site of the one mentioned by Leland. But one of the most commonly recorded events of Uxbridge is the meeting of the Commissioners of Charles I. and the Parliamentary representatives, in which some compromise was offered.

The Crown Inn still stands where this was attempted, and the fine panelled oak room is in perfect repair, though the inn is hardly more than a beer-house, with an abundance of empty space.

Lysons gives in his 'Parishes of Middlesex' an excellent copper-plate etching of this inn; it was, when he wrote, in a more perfect condition than it is at present. Of these meetings we have an account in Clarendon which is as accurate and graphic as the rest of his narrative:—'Uxbridge being within the enemy's quarters, the King's commissioners were to have such accommodation as the others saw fit to leave to them, who had been very civil in the distribution, and left one entire side of the town to the King's commissioners, one house only excepted, which was



*The Swan Inn.*

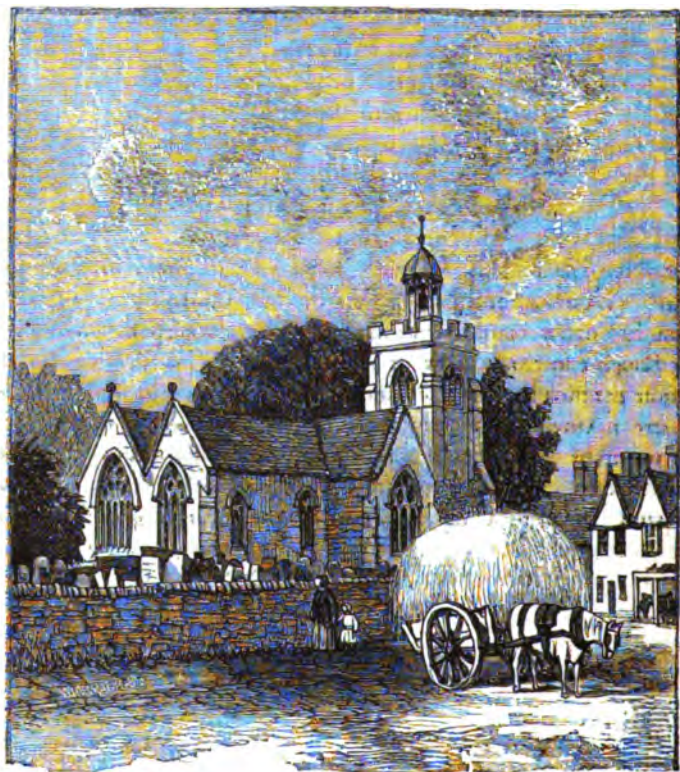
given to the Earl of Pembroke.' Some few records that throw a little light upon the mode of proceeding are very interesting, and are copied verbatim from Lord Clarendon's exhaustive work. 'There was a good house at the end of the town, which was provided for the treaty, where was a faire room in the middle of the house, handsomely dressed up for the commissioners to sit in; a large square table being placed in the middle with seats for the commissioners—one side being sufficient for those of either party; and a rail for others who should be thought necessary to be

present, which went round. There were many other rooms on each side of the great room for the commissioners on each side to retire to when they thought fit to consult by themselves, and to return again to the publick debate; and there being good stairs at either end of the house, they never went through each other's quarters, nor met but in the great room.' This great room has not been altered or restored, and if the traveller is fortunate in coming to terms with the hostess, he will see the room where the commissioners met to discuss a foregone conclusion. 'As soon as the King's commissioners came to the town, all those of the Parliament came to visit and to welcome them, and within an hour those of the King's returned the visit with the usual civilities, each professing a great desire and hope that the treaty would produce a good peace. The first visits were all together and in one room, the Scots being in the same room with the English. Each party eat always together, there being two great inns, which served very well to that purpose. The Duke of Richmond, being steward to his Majesty's house, kept his table there for all the King's commissioners, nor was there any restraint from giving or receiving visits apart, as their acquaintance and inclination disposed them: in which those of the King's party used their accustomed freedom as heretofore.' But on the other side there was great wariness and reservedness; and so great a jealousy of each other, that they had no mind to give or receive visits to or from their old friends; whom they loved better than their new. Nor would any of them be seen alone with any of the King's commissioners, but had always one of their companions with them, and sometimes one whom they least trusted. It was observed by the town and the people that flocked thither, that the King's commissioners looked as if they were at home, and governed the town; and the others as if they were not in their own quarters; and the truth is, they had not the alacrity and serenity of mind as men use to have who did not believe themselves to be in default.

'The King's commissioners would willingly have performed their devotions in the church. Nor was there restraint upon them from doing so; that is, by inhibition from Parliament, otherwise than that by the Parliament's ordinance (as they called it) the book of Common Prayer was not permitted to be read, nor the vestures, nor the ceremonies of the church to be used, so that the days of devotion were observed in the great room of the inn.'

Close to Uxbridge is Hillingdon; the grounds of Hillingdon House adjoin the outskirts of the town, and in some of the records

are curious items. There were two mills of fifty-one shillings value, and half a mill that produced five shillings. There was also an *arpent* of vineyard (the old French *arpent* is rather less than an English acre), and one weir, which produced five shillings. This latter was of course for the capture of eels, which in those days formed a considerable item in charges on all kinds of property. In this church there are many monuments and some valuable brasses. The churchyard is unusually full of grave-



*Hillingdon Church.*

stones and altar tombs in consequence of its connection with Uxbridge. Among the monuments in the churchyard is one to *John Rich, Esq.*, with the inscription—

Sacred to the memory of

JOHN RICH, Esq.

Who died Nov. 26, 1761, aged 69 years.

In him were united the various virtues that could endear him to his family, friends, and acquaintance. Distress never failed to find relief in his bounty, unfortunate merit a refuge in his generosity.

Mr. Rich was the patentee of Covent Garden Theatre, and is handed down to fame as the inventor of the English harlequin, a character which he performed under the assumed name of Lunn.

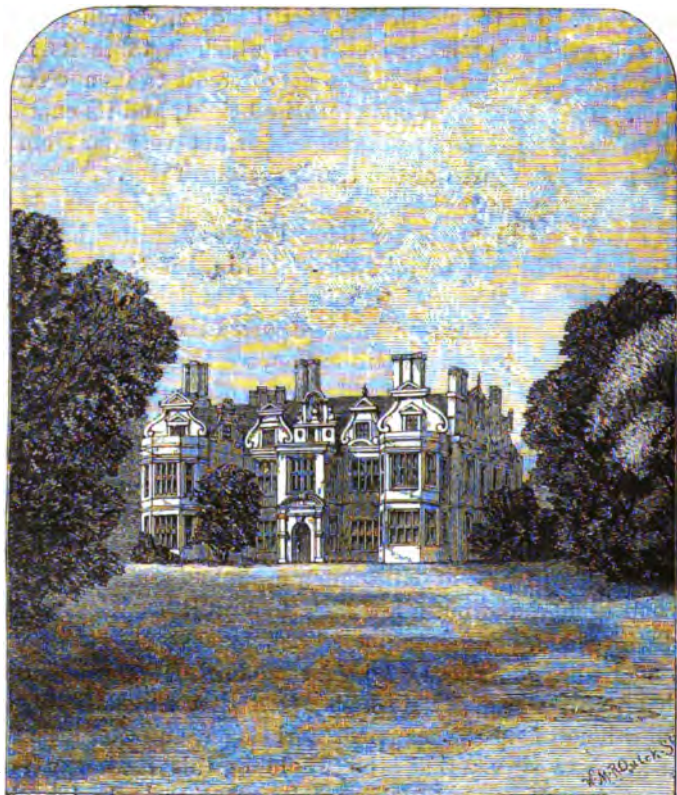
The rectory-house of Hillingdon was formerly used as an inn or resting-place by the bishops of Worcester, on their visits to London; the reason being that, as there was not any inn in the neighbourhood, this place should be assigned to them for their use, as they were often sent for by the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury. On the north side of Hillingdon church is Cedar House, where the great cedar-tree, from which it takes its name, stands, and its dimensions would do no discredit to its ancestry in Palestine. It is more than fifty feet in height, and its enormous diameter from branch end to branch end is not very far from one hundred feet. The girth of the trunk is sixteen feet.

At Hillingdon the public-house called the Red Lion stands, and it can boast of an old title, for King Charles I. rested here when he escaped from Oxford to join the Scots in 1646. Dr. Hudson thus speaks of the circumstance in his examination before the Parliamentary committee:—‘After we passed Uxbridge, at one Mr. Tisdale’s house, a tavern in Hillingdon, we alighted and staid to refresh ourselves between ten and eleven of the clock, and then staid two or three hours, when the King was much perplexed what course to resolve upon—London or Northward. About two of the clock we took a guide towards Barnet.’ It is interesting to learn from the court rolls of the manor of Colham, on referring back, that the Red Lion does appear to have been kept by John Tisdale. To the north and west of Hillingdon are many seats of great interest and beauty, and not a few have historical associations connected with them.

From Hillingdon, if we take the road to Ruislip, we shall pass Ickenham. In Domesday Book it is said that three knights and one Englishman held the manor of Earl Roger, and there is a note in that accurate survey that ‘the whole of this land now lies in Coleham, where it was not in King Edward’s time.’ In Ickenham parish is Swakeley House, which formerly belonged to a family named Brocas; and Norden, speaking of it in 1596, mentions it as ‘sometime a house of the Brockeyes, now of Sir Thomas Sherleye’s.’ This manor in 1629 became the property of Sir Edmund Wright, alderman of London, and the present mansion was built by him in 1638. This date appears on some of the leaden pipes, with E.W. over it. Sir Edmund became Lord Mayor of London in 1641, but as his tendencies were to the Royal cause he was removed from his office by Parliament, and then Swakeley became the property of Sir William Harrington, a man of singular abili-



ties, and one who sate on the trial of King Charles. The general appearance of this mansion is most pleasing and venerable. It is built of the beautiful red bricks which were wrought with such skill in the seventeenth century—bricks which show how well the builders of that period understood their materials. The entrance, which is shown in the porch, leads into a fine hall paved with black and white stone, and there is a well-carved oak screen in it with a



*Swakeley House.*

bust of Charles I. and a lion guardant on each side. There are fine well-proportioned rooms and a grand staircase of black oak in this stately mansion. The grounds are perhaps rather flat, but they are finely diversified with spreading timber. Formerly there was a much more ancient residence here, and remains of it have from time to time been discovered on the premises. Swakeley has for generations been the residence of the Clarke family, who nearly a century and a half ago purchased the advowson on Ickenham church.

Of course, only a very few of the scenes that are so well worth visiting, and that lie so near Harrow and Eton, can be given in this series of papers, and a guide-book is hardly attempted. Yet many an old Etonian or Harrovian may be reminded of scenes and friendships and early impressions that have left an indelible mark on the memory. Thackeray, in one of his many fine passages on the recollections of academic days, says that, as we turn over some old letters or memoranda, a strange sympathy is often aroused. 'How strange the epigrams look in those half-boyish hands, and what a thrill the sight of the documents gives one after the lapse of a few lustres! How fate in that time has removed some, estranged others, dealt awfully with all! Many a hand is cold that wrote those kindly memorials and that we pressed in the confident and generous grasp of youthful friendship. What passions our friendships were in those old days, how artless, and void of doubt! How the arm that you were never tired of having linked in yours under the fair college avenues or by the river side, where it washes Magdalen gardens or Christ Church meadows, or winds by Trinity and King's, was withdrawn of necessity when you entered presently the world, and each parted to push and struggle for himself through the great mob on the way through life! Are we the same men now that wrote those inscriptions—that read those poems, that delivered and heard those essays and speeches, so simple, so pompous, so ludicrously solemn; parodied so artlessly from books? . . . Here is Jack moaning with despair and Byronic misanthropy, whose career at the university was one of unmixed milk punch. Here is Tom's daring essay in defence of suicide and republicanism in general, *à propos* of the death of Roland and the Girondins—Tom's, who wears the starchest tie in all the diocese, and would rather go to Smithfield than eat beefsteak on a Friday in Lent. Here is Bob of the — circuit, who has made a fortune in railway committees, and whose dinners are so good, bellowing out with Tancred and Godfrey,

On to the breach, ye soldiers of the Cross;  
Scale the red wall and swim the choking foss.  
Ye dauntless archers, twang your crossbows well!  
On, bill and battle-axe and mangonel;  
Ply battering-ram, and hurling catapult;  
Jerusalem is ours—*id Deus vult.*

After which comes a mellifluous description of the gardens of Sharon and the maids of Salem, and a prophecy that roses shall deck the entire country of Syria, and a speedy reign of peace be established; and there are essays and poems along with those grave parodies, and boyish exercises (which are at once frank and



false, and so mirthful, and yet somehow so mournful) by youthful hands that shall never write more. Fate has interposed darkly, and the young voices are silent, and the eager brains have ceased to work.

‘This one had genius and a great descent, and seemed to be destined for honours that are now of little worth to him—that had virtue, learning, genius, every faculty and endowment which might secure love, admiration, and worldly fame. An obscure and solitary churchyard contains the graves of many fond hopes, and the pathetic stone which bids them farewell.’ Thackeray in this beautiful passage is only giving expression to his own recollections of a friend: ‘I saw the sun shining on it in the fall of last year; and heard the sweet village choir.’ But most of us can look back to our academic days with less of sadness than the great fiction-writer, and, after more than a quarter of a century of absence from old collegiate scenes, can still find familiar faces, and talk over bygone times; a little bulk may be added to the friend of our youth, but he is there still, and bearing fruit according to his measure, or according perhaps to the measure of fitness he possesses for the lot into which the chances and changes of life have thrown him. Some continental academies can teach us a lesson in this: they not only regard the fitness of a youth for business, but even keep an eye upon his aptitude in sports; and a well-known Jesuit college, that corresponds in a measure with Eton, especially takes care that pupils shall remember kindly every circumstance of their early years. Thorns there may be, and bramble-bushes, in all collegiate assemblies, though they are not the rule; and when they crop out, they hardly flourish among their fellows. They produce neither figs nor grapes, and, by a singular but unerring rule, they seem soon to be lost sight of. Most of our fellow-pupils we are not only glad to meet after a lapse of years, but when we compare notes we find that the influences of our early days are present with us yet, and the just and kindly professor or master has installed himself for ever in our best recollections.

ALFRED RIMMER.

(*The End.*)

## A Heart's Problem.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### HIS WAY OF IT.

WELL—of all the cold-blooded pieces of cruelty he had ever heard or read of, this was the most atrocious! To come to him whilst the breath announcing her engagement was still warm in the air; to stand there and speak to him as calmly as if he were no more than a respectable man of business who was to be paid for his services!—it was the most deliberate and heartless insult that could be offered to any poor creature.

Good God!—what was she made of? Could she have any feeling at all? And did she think that he had none—that he was as cold and passionless as herself? Yet she could not be passionless either: he had good reason to know that. But then, her display of passion had been the pitiful outburst of offended vanity, not offended love. Without a doubt she had come there, moved by some vicious curiosity to look once more at the man she had thrown aside so contemptuously, and to prove to him that she was quite indifferent about the past. How calmly she spoke: how calm she looked—and how beautiful! . . . Yes: be she what she might, in soul she was still beautiful, and those eyes were to him still full of a soft light which seemed to be the moon-reflection of a glorious sun within.

Curse it! Why was this sickening yearning taking possession of him again? Why was all life sinking away from him and he, without her, only a worthless atom floating blindly, aimlessly about in a world of dense fog?

But it was unpardonable—her coming there at such a time: coming at the very hour when he was flattering himself that it was possible to accept the dull round of the humdrum existence she had left him. He had been vaguely sensible that he was falling into his dull groove and was beginning to have some glimpses of that peace of mind which is obtained in a state of sheer stupidity, and which was worth having, although there are in it no days of great hope and happy endeavour. She came, and again arose that terrible mental Frankenstein, called 'What-might-have-been!'

But he had been calm, too, throughout the interview; he had been business-like and polite: nothing more. He hoped he had been polite; he meant to be so—perfectly polite. He meant to show her every possible sign of respect, and only to hide from her how every nerve was thrilling with the wild craving merely to touch her hand. She had not seen that, and she could not feel it. Yet the longing had been upon him all the time, and the effort to conceal it made it hard to bear. There she was, standing before him—Lucy. He heard her voice, and no matter what its tone, something modulated the sound into the sweet voice of Lucy.

It was useless striving with this thing which had not only taken possession of his being, but was his being. He hated to call it love: the meaning of the poor word had become so degraded by its application to any passing whim of a boy or the fancy of a girl—having as much bearing upon the actual business of their lives as the temporary mania of the one for a bicycle and of the other for a new dress. This strange thing which held him, like Victor Hugo's devil-fish, was his life. He smiled at the droll simile; probably devil-fish was as good a name as could be found for this mysterious Something which gave pain as intense as its pleasure.

And so she was to marry Sir Frederick Powell, of Woodstow: it was a good match. He was a sensible fellow, with no absurd views about anything; an easy-going mortal, good-natured and happy, because he was content to follow the plain beaten paths before him, and never had a thought of stepping aside to seek impossible flowers through impenetrable mazes. She would be happy with such a man—that was something. Maurice could fancy her in the first wedded years enjoying all the pleasures which wealth could obtain, and passing on to contented matronhood, quietly performing the round of simple duties which would fall to her lot. And through all this Powell would be by her side. Then he could see Lucy sharing the drudgery of a hard-working life with himself, the long path made thorny by petty cares and perhaps failure at the end. It was well she was spared that trial: there was no question, she had chosen the right course, and he ought to be glad. Was that sharp twinge of pain only the sting of regret? He hoped it was not jealousy, for jealousy is only an open confession of how little one thinks of oneself.

He wished he could stop thinking about her. How ridiculous he would appear in the eyes of any sensible man for surrendering himself even for a day to this state of hopelessness! What, for instance, would Arkwood say?

'Say that he thought you had gone out and forgotten to fasten the door.'

In his impatience with himself, Maurice had uttered the last question aloud, and Arkwood answered it in person.

'I don't think that would have been your answer if you knew what I was grumbling about.'

'What might it have been, then?'

'That I was the most hopeless imbecile that had ever been born.'

'The observation would have been a very stale one,' rejoined Arkwood with a faint attempt to speak in a tone of good-natured banter; but he looked serious as he scanned his friend's face. 'I think I know what is uppermost in your mind. Your father has been with me.'

'Then, do not repeat anything of what he has said. Some day, perhaps, I shall tell you my story; meanwhile, help me to forget.'

'Very good. Then, come away to lunch!'

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HER WAY OF IT.

UNFORGIVING—pitiless—callous! She had not detected the faintest note of regret in his voice, and she felt sure that her quickened senses would have felt it had there been any in his heart. She had been treated as a perfect stranger; he had accepted her angry words literally, and he could never have cared for her, or it would have been impossible for him to behave so coolly in her presence. Not the slightest sign in word or manner that he wished to be forgiven, or that he believed she had anything to forgive.

Proud and remorseless! She might have asked him to forgive *her* if he had only spoken one kind word. But no; he forgot, or never thought of, all she had suffered, and remembered in his pride only her one blunder. She knew that she had blundered terribly in her passion, and he would not forgive her. For that one fault he cast everything else aside, and shook himself free from her, as composedly as he might have put away an old garment. Whatever place she might have formerly held in his thoughts, he had completely thrust her out, and evidently it had cost him no trouble.

What a fool she had been! How he would triumph in her weakness! She had actually gone to his chambers, sought him out herself, and asked his help! She had done this—she who had threatened to insult him if he ever dared to speak to her. He would not give a thought to the peculiar circumstances of the case which had induced her to seek his aid. If he were reminded of them—that he had known Teddy, and that Teddy's mother had

been kind to him—he would have looked upon them as nothing more than excuses. Oh what a fool she had been !

But she had not betrayed any weakness either. She, too, had behaved with perfect calmness ; and he could not have seen in his indifference how eagerly she was watching for any sign of tenderness, or even of remembrance, which would have justified her in explaining her motives for going to him. She would take care that he should know. He should not think that——

But was she actuated by no other motive than the desire to obtain the best available counsel when she took Mrs. O'Bryan to Maurice's chambers ? Was it only impatience to learn what fate was in store for her foster-brother which took her up to his room when, by waiting a few minutes longer in the carriage, she could have heard all without undergoing the ordeal of the interview ?

She met the questions bravely ; and miserable, mean as the answers made her feel, she did not evade them.

Yes, although she had tried to conceal it from herself, she was obliged to own that the longing to have direct news of himself—how he looked—what his place was like—had influenced her ; and then, being at his door, as it were, the longing overcame pride and prudence, and she had gone to him. There had been, too, the vague hope that he would break down the bar which separated them, and that she would have the opportunity to speak freely to him once again.

She was glad she had done it, for it satisfied her that he was well, and quite settled in his resolution to think no more about her ; quite contented to forget her.

And yet it was a pity to have gone ; for the visit had destroyed some visions which, although vain, had yet their value in occasional gleams of comfort. She would not have gone, she would not have remembered that he had anything to do with the law if it had not been for what Teddy had told her on the evening he (luckily for himself, as it now turned out) came to the house in Kensington. Maurice had written to her ; Teddy had got the letter and burnt it without knowing what was in it ; then he pretended that Maurice had sent for his things, and so sent them off to Calthorpe.

Had she misjudged anyone else as she had misjudged Maurice, she would have at once offered an apology. Why was it she hesitated to make one to him ? She did wish him to know that she was now aware of the wrong she had done him, and that she was sorry for it. She did wish him to know that she was convinced of his fidelity before the fact was revealed to her ; and still she shrank from it.

She would hesitate no longer. She would tell him how cruelly they had both been made to suffer by Teddy's folly, and she would ask him to forgive her. . . . Would that be right? Would it not disturb him again for no good purpose, except to relieve her mind of a burden of remorse, since they could never resume their former relationship so long as their positions remained as they were at present? . . . And yet that could have made no difference if he had cared for her as he had declared he did. He had said that he lived for her. Ay, but it was at that moment she had turned upon him, telling him that he was false and base.

It was horrible. But why did he not tell her about that letter? Had he done so, she believed that in her wildest passion she would have been ready to forget everything in the joy that knowledge would have brought her. Now it only brought new pain and bitter regret that would never leave her. Would she have changed so quickly in that time of madness? Perhaps not; perhaps he saw that she would not, and so remained silent, thinking it useless to speak.

She should tell him at once, and he could speak now if he chose to do so. But he would not do so; he was too indifferent; he had shown that in his letter—written after he had had time for reflection; and he had shown it in his conduct during that brief interview. She would write, and her letter should be like his own—cold and decisive.

'My visit to you to-day may be misunderstood; I therefore wish to say that, when taking Mrs. O'Bryan to your place, I had no intention of intruding upon you. But whilst waiting, it occurred to me, as I told you, that by going upstairs I might satisfy my impatience to hear what you might have to say about her son, and perhaps, at the same time, find an opportunity of telling you that I regret having been the cause of any pain to you. I did not find that opportunity, and am obliged to take this means of informing you. I further wish to say that I did not know until two nights ago that you had written a letter to Lucy Smith after you left Camberwell. That letter was destroyed unopened, and nothing was said to her about it until the time mentioned.

'MABEL OUTHBERT.'

There: that would do. It was cold enough, at any rate. It showed him that she was aware of her mistake, and was sorry for it; but there was no weakness about it—no begging for pity. He would see that she, too, was resolute, and that since she knew him to be indifferent, she was satisfied.

There was the end of it all; and it was not so difficult to write to him as she had feared it would be. But it would have been much better if she had not seen him—much better if Teddy had kept the secret of his treachery, since his confession had only re-opened the wounds which now could never be healed. And yet

she was glad to be assured that Maurice had been true; glad of it even when she felt most keenly that he did not care for her. . . . Did she really believe that he did not care for her? If so, there was no need to be anxious to inform him of her discovery, for it was of no consequence whether he knew it or not.

Let him think what he liked—comfort himself, if he could, by thinking that she was heartless as she had thought him. She had found no comfort in that way, but then she loved him. . . . Let this letter, like his to Lucy, disappear also, its contents unknown to anyone save the writer. Cold as it was, perhaps his own had been still colder—probably it had contained only a conventional intimation that the room above the tailor's shop need no longer be reserved for him; and not, as she wished to believe, the glad tidings of his speedy return.

She lit a taper, and holding over the flame the note she had written, smiled sadly as she watched it change into black films.

She would not allow herself to worry; she would fill up every moment of her waking time with some occupation of amusement or duty. Should her father continue to wish to see her 'settled in life,' as he called it, she supposed that Sir Frederick Powell would make her as happy as she could hope to be. It was possible that there might be very pleasant times at Woodstow, and maybe her loss would make her the more staid and useful housewife.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SORROWS OF A POOR OLD MAN.

MR. CALTHORPE really could not stand it any longer. He had used all his diplomatic arts to bring about a natural reconciliation; circumstances had seconded his efforts in a remarkable manner; as for patience, he had, in his own opinion, earned in this respect a much higher reputation than Job, and what was the result? Absolute failure. Contrary to all human experience and calculation of the due course of events, the result was absolute failure. Why was this? Simply and entirely on account of the stubborn, unreasoning, unpardonable——

Oh! he could find no adjective strong enough to characterise the idiocy of his son. The prize was still within Maurice's reach, and he would not seize it. A few months, perhaps a few weeks, and the last chance would be gone; for the prospective marriage of Miss Cuthbert to Sir Frederick Powell, although still talked about by the friends of both parties as a secret, was talked about as an event certain to take place at no distant date.

So far, Colonel Cuthbert had made no decisive announcement,

and Mr. Calthorpe was convinced that he would be well pleased if Maurice should yet be the man of her choice.

‘I shall not express an opinion one way or another,’ he said. ‘I shall not even hint at a partiality. I like Powell, and am quite ready to trust my daughter with him. The fact is, she does not wish to marry at all.’

‘That counts for little; there are few girls who do not make that assertion, especially to their fathers.’

‘That may be, but I believe she is one of the few who mean what they say.’

‘And the few who mean it are thinking of some one they cannot have. It is surprising, my dear Cuthbert, how self-sacrificing we can all be over sour grapes. Of course, Miss Cuthbert is an exception.’

‘She is thinking of Maurice,’ was Mr. Calthorpe’s private reflection, and he found much consolation in it. He was elate with triumph when, a few days afterwards, he heard this:—

‘Since the acquittal of that fellow Teddy O’Bryan, she has twice mentioned Maurice, and gives him the whole credit of having rescued that young fool from the hangman.’

But Mr. Calthorpe’s hopes were again dashed to the ground when he reported the interesting fact of her gratitude to his son. Maurice bluntly repudiated the idea that he had anything to do with Teddy’s release; and instead of being pleased by the account of her gratitude, appeared to be decidedly the reverse. The father was too much astounded by this persistent obstinacy to speak at the moment. It was in his eyes such a wilful throwing overboard of fortune, that even lunacy seemed scarcely to afford sufficient explanation for it.

‘But why on earth should you not accept the credit for it, when it is given to you unasked?’ was his exclamation when he recovered breath.

‘Because I should not like to appear more ridiculous in her eyes than I do already,’ was the conclusive rejoinder.

Mr. Calthorpe almost lost his temper; and as no conversation in which temper plays a part ever ends satisfactorily for the person who introduces it, he discreetly postponed further discussion.

He had made him aware that she was not only thinking of him, but sounding his praises, and that would have its influence. When you wish to make two people like each other, you have only to keep them judiciously supplied with reports of the flattering observations each makes about the other when apart, and the thing is done. Hatred is easily engendered by a similar process.

He dined alone that evening at his club. He had his favourite



dishes and his favourite wines, and he looked forward with placid melancholy to the dark days in store for him when his place at this table would be all that was left of his former greatness. It was too bad of Maurice to ruin his father as he was doing; to drive him out of his home in his declining years, and cast him upon the great world of London with no anchorage save here. Well, he would endure; he would resign himself to his fate. King Lear had railed at his daughters for their ingratitude, but he would not act in that way: he would be generous, and forget his wrongs if possible. If occasion offered, he might make another effort to bring Maurice to reason, but it should be the last.

The occasion did offer itself sooner than he could have anticipated, and after reading a note he had received by the first post one morning, he proceeded to his son's chambers. Arrived there, Mr. Calthorpe put down his hat and umbrella, then slowly took off his gloves, which he carefully smoothed and placed in the hat. He had the air of one who has some serious matter of business on his mind, a matter of so much import that it must be approached with all possible gravity.

Maurice was finishing a letter, and asked his father to excuse him for a moment, as he was desirous of despatching it at once.

'Certainly; do not let me interfere with anything you are doing, because when you can speak to me I am anxious to have your undivided attention.'

Mr. Calthorpe clasped his hands behind him, walked deliberately to the window and looked out. Maurice closed his letter and gave it to a lad who was waiting.

'Now, sir, I am quite at your service,' he said briskly, as he closed the door and resumed his seat.

The father turned his back to the window and faced his son. There was a brighter look upon the face than he had seen for a long time, and it contrasted singularly with the gravity of his own.

'Do you know what date this is?' he asked quietly.

'Wednesday, fourteenth September,' was the prompt reply.

'And are you aware that in six months I shall have to leave Calthorpe?'

'I have not forgotten it, sir; but I thought that, so far as I was concerned, we had spoken our last upon the subject unless I should have found the means to enable you to retain the place.'

'Well, you have not found the means, and, although they are within your reach, you obstinately refuse to secure them.'

Maurice was silent.

You accept the position so complacently that I find it

difficult to believe you thoroughly realise all that this means to me.'

'Believe me, sir, I have thought of it very anxiously and often. But you gave me to understand that you yourself were satisfied that it was beyond my power to do as you wished. You gave me to understand that you were ready to meet the misfortune with resignation, since it could not be helped.'

Mr. Calthorpe took a chair and seated himself opposite his son.

'And so I was, and so I am prepared to accept the misfortune with resignation—provided it cannot be helped. But it is one thing to be content to sink when there is no possibility of keeping your head above water; it is quite another to resign yourself to going down when you see someone near you who has only to stretch out his hand to save you from drowning. That is precisely our position.'

'I am afraid I cannot see it exactly in your way.'

'I am afraid that I must really lose patience with you. Now, my dear Maurice, do consider how we stand from a common-sense point of view. I do not pretend to be able to enter into your exalted feelings in regard to matrimony, and I certainly do not appreciate the course of conduct which they induce you to pursue.'

Maurice rested his elbow on the table, shading his eyes with his hand.

'I think you will admit,' Mr. Calthorpe went on, 'that since our memorable interview at home I have not pressed this subject upon you.'

'That is so.'

'I own that I did hope, I will even go so far as to admit that I expected, things would right themselves.'

This was said as if he were making a generous admission to the advantage of his opponent in argument.

'And you have been disappointed, sir.'

'On your part, most emphatically. No one can admire independence of character more than I do; no one can be more ready to assert that independence than I am, on due occasion. But you are mistaking the promptings of wounded vanity for honourable independence.'

'I hope not.'

'It is so, I assure you; any man with the slightest experience of the world would tell you the same. Just suppose for an instant that the positions had been reversed. Suppose that the lady was Lucy Smith and that you had, in a moment of passion, said to her

the unpleasant things she said to you—would you not be sorry afterwards and regard her as acting unkindly, as well as foolishly, if she gave you no opportunity of making amends?’

‘Very likely I should; but I do not think that you grasp the position, and it is impossible to imagine what might happen if she were a man and I a woman,’ answered Maurice without uncovering his eyes; and there was a curious huskiness in his voice, as if the absurdity of his father’s suggestion had disposed him to laughter in spite of the earnestness with which it had been made.

‘Then, you mean to persist in your insane course?’

‘It is too late to alter it now.’

This doggedness was very trying to the father; open rebellion he could understand and deal with; but this dull, passionless rejection of all reason was most irritating, and this insensibility to every ordinary feeling of self-interest was as incomprehensible to Mr. Calthorpe as it was apparently insurmountable. They had come to a dead-lock.

‘Very well,’ said Mr. Calthorpe, rising slowly, ‘we need not prolong this painful conversation. I may mention, however, that I have this morning received an invitation to luncheon at Colonel Cuthbert’s; it is written by Miss Cuthbert, and in a postscript she tells me that she particularly wishes to see me. Have you no friendly word to send?’

‘No.’

Mr. Calthorpe waited for a moment, as if hoping that Maurice would yet relent. Then, sarcastically:

‘May I not even convey your congratulations on her forthcoming marriage?’

‘Oh, yes, certainly,’ replied Maurice with symptoms of agitation at last. ‘You may congratulate her for me if you like; and you may tell her at the same time that I also am about to be married.’

‘Your jest, sir, is not agreeable or timely, and sounds somewhat like mockery of me.’

‘You are mistaken, father; it is no jest, and I do not mean to be offensive to you. I intended it to be a pleasant surprise.’

Mr. Calthorpe surveyed his son with an expression of mingled dubiety and vexation.

‘You to be married!’ he exclaimed, glossing his sneer with pretended playfulness; ‘to another landlady’s daughter, I presume, or some pretty Oxford Street milliner.’

‘You have made a very bad guess. I have no fear that you will be discontented when you know the lady,’ said Maurice, smiling.

ing at his father's efforts to maintain his air of calm politeness.

'May I be permitted to inquire what is her name?'

'At present it is by her request a secret even from you.'

'Umph . . . . Has she a fortune?'

'Yes.'

'And position?'

'Yes, and beauty and goodness besides.'

'Ah, the first two qualifications will suffice to bear the burden of the others. My dear boy, the best congratulation I can offer you is in telling you that this news has added twenty years to my life, and I rejoice that we shall be able to spend them together—for of course you will make Calthorpe your headquarters?'

'I am not sure of that yet, and at any rate we need not settle about it until Calthorpe is free.'

'Of course, of course, it is a mere detail,' assented the father, hastily dismissing the disagreeable reminder, and proceeding with as much self-complacency as if mortgages and probable foreclosure were unknown to him: 'Now I can go to Cuthbert's with a light heart and—aha!—Yes!—by Jove, I see it now.'

His eyes brightened as if he had made some marvellous discovery and was proud of it.

'See what, sir?'

'Don't you see?—why, she is able to speak about you now. She has heard of your engagement—these things do ooze out somehow, although, as in the present instance, some of those most interested are always the last to have the news. She has heard of it, and therefore feels herself at liberty to speak of you now, thinking that she cannot be misunderstood. Very likely she is sorry, too—of course I should congratulate her upon her escape from such a scamp as my son.'

'She might not be pleased by any reference ——'

'Tut, tut, you do not suppose I am such a fool as you are—not to see that it is only my little joke! Upon my word, I have become as much excited over the affair as if I were myself to be the bridegroom. Fortune and position!—my dear Maurice, I always predicted that you would make a hit some day.'

'I have been very lucky.'

'And you deserve it. There is my hand—I am proud of you!'

'I am glad of that, sir. I sometimes feared that you regarded me as hopelessly insane.'

Mr. Calthorpe held up his hands deprecatingly.

'No raking up of old scores, if you please. I may give Cuthbert a hint, I suppose?'

'You may tell him all you know.'

'Then, I shall start at once.'

'I am going in your direction,' so the one cab will serve us both.'

## CHAPTER XX.

### IS THE PROBLEM SOLVED?

'It is her own free, unprompted request, and I certainly think you have no alternative but to comply with it.'

'That is your way of putting it, but she must have been influenced by what you said, or she would never have thought of sending such a pressing message to me, after what occurred only the other day, and knowing that I must be aware of her engagement.'

'I can say nothing on that head. I have brought the message simply because I wish to serve two friends.'

'I am obliged to you for all the kindness you intended; but I should have been more grateful, Arkwood, if you had not meddled so much in my affairs.'

'For the next week I give you licence to be as disagreeable to me as you may find relief in being. I am not going to be hurt by anything you may say in your present humour. I knew that the idea of being called to her would startle you, and I know that as soon as you have cooled down you will own that I have acted the part of a friend—and a most thankless part that often is, as you are teaching me.'

'I cannot help feeling that it would have been best for all parties if you had let things alone.'

'Maybe; but if I have been meddling, as you call it, it has been because the ordinary expressions of friendship have assumed that form. There was nothing obtrusive in my accompanying Colonel Cuthbert and his daughter home after O'Bryan had been acquitted—for you know my acquaintance with them has not been interrupted. There was nothing unusual in the fact that the conversation should turn upon the scrape her old companion had got into, or in my telling how much interest you had taken in the case.'

'But it was not necessary to go on to tell her about my insane efforts to discover Lucy, it was not necessary to show what an absolute fool I am.'

'I don't know that such was the result of my conversation; and at any rate you need not be afraid that I was sentimental or that she is likely to be so. She simply says there is an explanation due to you—that it can only be properly made by her own lips, and that fearing that she may lose strength or courage

to make it if there is delay, she begs you will grant her the favour to come back with me ; and I say, Come along !'

'But what is the good of it ?'

'How can I tell ? She seemed to me to be much disturbed, and I promised that you should grant the favour she asked. And so, I again say, Come along. There is nothing very dreadful in a few minutes' interview with a pretty woman, even if you have once professed to be desperately in love with her.'

'Professed !' echoed Maurice bitterly ; 'I wish it had been only that.'

'It is my opinion she would cordially reciprocate that wish.'

'Very well, I shall go ; but I hope there will be no hysterics or nonsense. I go simply because I do not wish to think hereafter that I wilfully did anything to give her pain.'

His face became hard and dark ; his movements quick and decisive.

'There is no yielding on his side whatever there may be on hers,' thought Arkwood as he watched his friend's gloomy countenance.

On the way to Kensington, Maurice was silent : he felt very cold. He was going to see her again, and, instead of the pulse bounding with joy, he had the sensation of being numbed from head to foot. No good could come of this meeting : it was only another tug at his heartstrings : surely this time they would break. He did not see what she could possibly have to say to him, unless Arkwood in his mistaken kindness had persuaded her—or suggested—that she might still have the power to rouse him out of his apathy. She should find that she had lost all power to move him—outwardly at least. He would do anything rather than betray the longing which he had had so much difficulty in concealing during her recent visit to his chambers. He would treat the whole matter in a conventional way : there was some fun to be got out of the idea that he was doing no more than civility demanded in returning her call—only, he did not get the fun.

Arkwood had said that she had been much disturbed, and it made him uncomfortable to think of her in distress—tears perhaps, with pale face and agitated voice. He did not know how he should act if she should appear penitent for her share in the past misery. The mere thought of it was sapping his resolve to be perfectly calm and to make the conversation as brief as possible. When he stood at the door of Colonel Cuthbert's house he would have been glad of an excuse to turn away. But Arkwood promptly rang the bell ; and they were conducted up-stairs to the drawing-room.

Dark brown hangings which covered the door of an inner room were drawn aside, and Miss Cuthbert advanced to the visitors. Maurice became immediately conscious that there was no danger of any severe test of his feelings: her quiet self-possession assured him of that. But she was very pale, and her countenance, although calm, indicated that she had exercised much effort to nerve herself to the performance of a sad but unavoidable duty.

‘I have kept my promise, Miss Cuthbert,’ said Arkwood before she had time to speak; ‘and now, with your leave, I shall at once retire.’

There was no awkwardness in her manner of thanking him, no hint of surprise at his abrupt departure.

They were alone together.

He stood, hat in hand, head slightly bowed, and conscious that she was looking at him. But he was not conscious of the sadness in the eyes, or of the ripple of agitation which passed over the face.

‘Mr. Calthorpe!’

He raised his eyes: he fancied that he detected a slight tremor on the lips, and that he distinguished a faint echo of the old sweet voice which used to sound so musically in his ears in the little room in Camberwell. He had an experience similar to that of the Sultan in the fairy tale who, under the influence of a great magician, imagined himself acting his part in the events of a long life during the brief space that he could hold his head in a tub of water. The richly furnished chamber in which they stood was transformed into the poor one of his old lodging; he saw himself and Lucy as they then were; the same feelings thrilled through him, and a clear vision of all that had happened up to the moment when he first saw Miss Cuthbert passed before him: all in the space which could only be counted an awkward pause.

Her sensations were the reflection of his; but they were overshadowed by the remembrance of that wild scene in the bungalow.

‘I beg your pardon, Miss Cuthbert,’ he said, and in spite of the effort he made, his voice was not so steady as he wished it to be.

She turned her head aside for a moment, and then quietly:—

‘I hope you will forgive me for having troubled you to come. I know that the meeting cannot be—agreeable to you; and you can . . . at least, you will understand that it is painful to me.’

He was not comfortable; he was not resolute; he was not calm. If she had only been a man, he could have told her bluntly that their position was such as to render their meeting most undesirable; and that what he could not understand was why she should have been so urgent in desiring it. But he almost stammered as he replied vaguely:—

'It would have been as well, perhaps—indeed, I cannot see why you should be troubled with my presence at all.'

There was another pause, her eyes fixed upon him all the time; he remaining quite still, glancing vacantly at a window. Then she advanced slowly to him, holding out her hand.

'Mr. Calthorpe,' she said in a clear, earnest voice, 'it was necessary to see you; I wish to ask you to forgive me.'

He took the hand mechanically; his brain was undergoing a series of electric shocks which dazed his intellect and blinded his eyes. That passed, and he looked straight in her face, analysing it, searching eagerly in every shade of expression for the answer to the question—'Is she in earnest now?' The very intensity of his passion made him calm. At that moment he realised what she had already grasped before his arrival, that the situation was too grave to allow of any awkwardness between them. They were standing face to face with their whole future, and their hands now clasped in them the possibilities of their lives.

'I do not know how to answer you, Miss Cuthbert,' he said at length; 'unless it can be an answer to tell you that life will be easier to me than I had expected it to be until now that I have seen you again, and heard you speak these words. They will enable me to remember you only as Lucy.'

'That will suffice, and I thank you. I wish you to remember me as Lucy, and that is why I am going to ask you now to permit me to show you how I came to make the . . . the mistake.'

She gently withdrew her hand: there had been no pressure on his part or hers. On ringing the bell Mrs. O'Bryan appeared.

'You may tell him to come now, mother.'

Mrs. O'Bryan disappeared; and presently the handle of the door was turned hesitatingly, and Teddy, the patriot, entered. He looked crestfallen; his red hair, which used to be like a tangled mop, lay close and lank on his head, as if he had just come out of a water-butt; his complexion was sallow, and he had the manner of one who is penitent against his will.

'Come, Teddy,' said his foster-sister, kindly taking him by the arm; 'you are to remember your promise to me, and you are to tell Mr. Calthorpe how it all happened. He will not ask you to say much.'

With that she bowed to Maurice and returned to the inner room. As the brown curtains closed behind her, Maurice felt as if the place had become dark.

'Come, Teddy, what is it you have to tell me?' he inquired presently.



Teddy moved his shoulders as if giving physical expression to an 'Ugh' of disgust with himself.

'That letter—' he muttered between his clenched teeth and in a tone that was half sulky, half savage, yet indicative of pain of some sort.

'What letter?'

Teddy groaned and swayed his body like one in a nightmare struggling to get free.

'The one you wrote to—*her*; the one you sent after leaving us—the one she ought to have got.'

'What do you mean? Did she not receive the letter?'

'No.'

'Then, how do you know about it?'

'I got it—but she didn't, and that's the whole of the matter.'

Teddy stopped and, sulkily clenching his hands, sank his chin upon his chest.

'Do you mean to say that you kept the letter from her?' Maurice pronounced each word deliberately, and as if he could scarcely believe his ears.

Teddy spoke rapidly and gutturally, as if with difficulty keeping his passion and pain under hand.

'I did. I believed you were deceiving her—maybe I wanted to believe it. I made her believe it. And you did deceive us all with your name—and all about you. How was I to know that you weren't the common informer that I took you for? How was I to know that you weren't making a fool of her when I found out your real name by accident. . . . I didn't read the letter—it didn't matter to me what was in it; *you* sent it, and that was enough; I didn't want her to know anything more about you.'

'What devil tempted you to do that?' cried Maurice, all Mabel's strange conduct and cruel treatment being explained to him by this ungracious confession.

'I have told you. Devil it was since I know that she has been troubled about it—ever since the mother told me that she was in trouble about you I have never known a minute's peace. I wish the boys had shot me instead of the policeman.'

'I wish they had,' retorted Maurice bitterly, and scarcely knowing what he said, whilst he paced the floor agitatedly.

'It's the best wish you can give me, though you don't know it,' said Teddy bitterly too, for he was in his way conscious of the meanness of his action, although he felt justified in having done it. 'I couldn't understand that she was taken up with you entirely, and if I had guessed it at that time—well, I'm glad I didn't, for the Lord Himself knows what might have happened. The old dad

used to be always telling me that I was raving, and raving I was about her, and it's been the sore trial for me to learn that I was the cause of making her sorry in the midst of her splendour.'

Maurice could not speak. Something in the man's voice and manner touched him, and much as he had formerly laughed at his patriotic rhodomontade, Maurice saw nothing ludicrous in him just now.

'And, Master,' Teddy went on gruffly, 'they tell me you took up the case for me, and that it was you that got me off, and that I ought to be grateful to you. But I can't—it only makes me hate you the more. That's all now, and I want to get you out of my sight.'

Rude as his words were, and gruff as his voice sounded, Teddy was choking with shame and regret. Maurice grasped his hand and gave it a vigorous shake.

'I understand, Teddy; you had reason to hate me, and I have still better reason to hate you. But I must see you when we are both cooler; at present I want to see Miss Cuthbert.'

'I am not sorry to leave you, sir,' said Teddy, unable to make any more generous response as he quitted the room.

Maurice requested the servant to ask Miss Cuthbert if he might see her for a few moments. She came at once. There was no light of triumph in her eyes: they were sadder than before.

Maurice spoke rapidly and excitedly.

'Teddy has told me what should make me glad, and I am glad, but there is so much misery mixed up in it that only one thing is clear to me, and that is the bitter knowledge that his petty act of jealous treachery has done us both irreparable harm. How you must have suffered! And I was the cause—I, who would have done anything rather than have given you the smallest pang—and I can do nothing to make amends. I am powerless even to let you see how I, too, suffered.'

His words came like a torrent; his cheeks were flushed, and his eyes bright.

'Do not blame yourself or Teddy too much,' she answered quietly; 'other circumstances combined to bring about our misfortune.'

'Will you ever forgive me?'

'I have too much to regret to have thought about—forgiving. Mr. Arkwood has told me how you tried to find me.'

'I thought you must be dead. Why did you mystify me so when we first met at Hollyford?'

'I cannot tell,' she answered frankly, and again that ripple of

agitation passed over her face. 'I cannot tell, except that the pain of thinking you had deceived me made me foolish—mad, I think. Your failure to identify me seemed to confirm all that I had been led to believe. . . . But why do we talk about this now? We have both blundered—I most—and we have to bear the sorrow we have made for ourselves.'

'No, no, no; it was I who blundered, and I wish that I might be the only one to suffer for it.'

'You know that cannot be,' she answered with a faint, sad smile, 'and I do not wish it to be. Whoever is to blame, there is no help for it now.'

'That thought is worst of all. There might be help for it if——'

He stopped, and his face became white. 'There is no help for it now,' she had said, and so quietly that the remembrance of her engagement thrust itself upon him, and her manner inspired the question, 'Was she resigned to it?' He felt chilled, as if the hot springs of love had been suddenly frozen. There was apparently no response on her part to the passion which he now became conscious he had displayed; her calm sadness was impenetrable. She was like one who, knowing her fate, has accepted it, and is ready to walk steadily forward without murmuring.

Should he, too, bow to this fate? or should he attempt to break through the barrier and rescue her from it? He had only to say good-bye and go away. She seemed to be waiting for him to do so, and he was moved by a perverse impulse to go. But he was not to be guided by impulse now. He also was ready to accept his fate and to pass on without whining; not, however, until he had proved to the uttermost that his fate was apart from hers. He should not, if he could help it, have cause to blame himself hereafter for having hesitated to adopt any honourable means by which he might secure the happiness he craved for; he should not have to reflect, 'If I had done this, or that, all might have been well.'

He was influenced and sustained in this resolution by what he had just heard from Teddy. The latter in his despairing howl had unconsciously iterated the fact that he confessed his treachery only because he had learned that his foster-sister was so much distressed about Maurice. There was a simple interpretation of that distress, and Maurice seized it eagerly, yet with the timidity which one feels when a long-coveted prize is unexpectedly placed within reach.

He spoke calmly, but there was subdued passion throbbing in every tone and look.

'I ought, perhaps, to do no more than thank you again and go; but I cannot do that. You said you wished me to remember you as Lucy; I do not think she would have wished me to go without at least trying to let you understand me fully. We seem both to have been walking in the dark, and daylight has come to us. We should not separate now without a thorough clearing up between us, for we can never have another opportunity of speaking freely together.'

'What can we do?' she asked, betraying emotion by the nervous way in which she rested her hand on the back of a chair.

'We can look our position deliberately in the face—you on your part, I on mine—and strive to find out what it really is. Then we can decide whether or not it is best for us to say good-bye, and it may save us some regret afterwards.'

'I do not think we can do that,' she exclaimed agitatedly, for his composure had the singular effect of completely upsetting hers; 'I am sure that I cannot. So many things come back to me—I cannot be calm, and it is useless to pretend it.'

His pulse bounded: all the sober considerations of their relative positions, of past doubts and possible future misunderstandings, which he had been making such a mighty effort to lay before her, vanished from his thought. His only sense was that she was standing there with her bright eyes fixed upon him, her pale cheeks flushed and lips trembling.

'At least you can answer this,' he cried; 'must we part?'

'It is as you will.'

'As I will——!'

She was in his arms: they kissed. The past, the future, doubt, fear, friends—the world were all annihilated: there was for them only that moment of complete joy.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### CONGRATULATIONS.

MR. CALTHORPE was accompanied by his son to the corner of the square in which Colonel Cuthbert's house was situated. There Maurice got out, 'leaving me to pay the fare, cunning dog!—he is sure to succeed,' said the father to himself, admiring his son's prudence. 'A man of truly economic mind is always distinguished by his carefulness about cab-fares and his umbrella.'

He was shown into the drawing-room, where he found Miss Cuthbert alone. It was the first time they had met in private

since the breach between her and Maurice; but Mr. Calthorpe was as gracious as if there had been no breach, and as if there had never been any interruption of the familiar intercourse he had been accustomed to hold with her as the oldest friend of her father. He was conscious of both circumstances, however, as well as of their cause, and he was secretly chuckling to himself at the prospect of the surprise he had in store for the proud lady. He had much satisfaction in thinking that he would presently show her how easily she and her fortune could be dispensed with by his son, and how greatly she had wronged him.

‘I am delighted to see you looking so remarkably well, my dear Miss Cuthbert. Upon my word, I think the air of London agrees with you better than that of Hollyford.’

‘And I am delighted that you have been able to come, Mr. Calthorpe; I was so much afraid that you might be engaged.’

He had not observed a momentary glance of slyness on her part as he entered, and he did not detect the twinkle of mischievous fun in her eyes when she spoke with natural cordiality.

‘Of course, my engagements are numerous—too numerous,’ he said with the air of a man who has resigned himself to the martyrdom of his own popularity, adding gallantly: ‘but when you summon me, everything else must give way.’

‘Thank you, it is very good of you to say so. But you know it is a long time since you visited us.’

‘That is true; dear me, how time does fly! I sometimes wonder if the great magician Science, amongst his other marvels, has not played us a trick and put some electric force into the wheels of Time, so that we find ourselves at the end of life before we are quite conscious that it has begun. But there, time is only an agreeable topic for the young; beauty is a topic for all ages. Let us talk about yourself. You wrote that you desired particularly to see me.’

‘Yes, and you will be surprised when you learn why.’

‘Pleasantly, I have no doubt.’

‘I hope so, for it is to ask you to—to my wedding.’

‘Your wedding!’

‘Yes, and I wished to ask you in this way rather than by a formal invitation, because you are my father’s oldest friend, and I feel as if you were almost a relative. I hope you will come.’

There was no more awkwardness in the delivery of this pretty little address than might have been expected; and if there were a slight emphasis on the words ‘almost a relative,’ it was not enough to attract attention.

‘Why, this is the second bridal announcement I have had this

morning,' ejaculated Mr. Calthorpe smiling, and yet sensible that the importance of his tidings was considerably lessened by what he had just heard. Then impressively, 'You have touched me deeply by asking me in this way and treating me as a relative. At one time, indeed, I had hoped to have the right of calling myself your close relative, your father had the same hope, and we thought it would be a pleasing climax to our life-long friendship. That was not to be. You young people have ways of your own which bewilder us old people, and we must be content to allow you to have pretty much your own way in the choice of partners.'

'My father is quite satisfied.'

'I have no doubt of it, and I trust most sincerely that none of us may be disappointed in the character of the man you have chosen, and on whom so much of your future happiness will depend. I can only say that it will afford me the greatest pleasure to be present at your marriage ceremony; and as one who sincerely desires that your life may be long and happy, I offer you my congratulations.'

Mr. Calthorpe had the agreeable sensation produced by the belief that he had acquitted himself most gracefully, and nothing could have surpassed the elegance of his bow as he concluded his remarks. His back was turned towards the door, so that he did not observe it open and give entrance to Colonel Cuthbert and Maurice. His attention was drawn to the fact by Mabel.

'I am glad to be able to introduce you at once, Mr. Calthorpe, to my future husband,' she said, laughing, as she took the hand of Maurice.

'What!—why, when was this arranged?' cried Mr. Calthorpe, astounded.

'Only a few days ago,' responded his son, 'and we have been obliged to allow her to be the first to give you the glad news. It was only delayed because she could not until last night muster courage enough to fix the time for telling you.'

Mr. Calthorpe looked in amazement from one to the other.

'But what about the engagement to Powell?'

'That was my mistake and Powell's, poor fellow,' said the Colonel. 'He always spoke to me so confidently that I, like him, fancied his suit was progressing favourably when it was making no progress at all.'

'My dear child,' said Mr. Calthorpe, embracing his future daughter-in-law, 'I congratulated you before, but I congratulate you again with all my heart. But it was not fair of you—you sly rogues!—to play such a huge practical joke upon me. And

you, Cuthbert, you are as bad as the others, for I would have detected the hoax at once but for you.'

'I really had no intention of misleading you.'

'Of course not, of course not. I forgive you—and you, my dear child; but I will not forgive Maurice. The fellow must have been laughing at me all the time I was talking so seriously to him this morning.'

'You have always something to complain about, sir,' said the unrepentant son.

'Of course I have—on principle. What would life be without a grievance?'

He had a substantial ground for complaint when he discovered what he called the maddest of mad-quixotic conditions which Maurice insisted upon. It was this: that Mabel should be content with the home he was able to provide for her, and to live upon what income he could earn, until such time as he should have paid off the mortgages on the Calthorpe estate. From this no persuasion of his father or the Colonel could move him, and they were obliged to yield the point when they found that Mabel was as firmly resolved upon it as himself. Mr. Calthorpe, however, easily resigned himself to the enjoyment of his old home, to the privilege of repeatedly reminding Maurice of his folly, whilst he generously left the management of the mortgages entirely to his care.

About a week after they were united Mabel rested her hand on Maurice's arm as he was reading a letter.

'What about Teddy?' she inquired anxiously.

'Arkwood can do nothing for him except obtain a promise that he will let his mother know if he should get into any difficulty. He sailed again for New York yesterday.'

'Poor Teddy! we owe some of our trouble to him, Maurice, and we owe to his misfortune our happiness.'

(*The End.*)

# BELGRAVIA.

JANUARY 1882.

## All Sorts and Conditions of Men:

AN IMPOSSIBLE STORY.

BY WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE,

Authors of '*Ready-money Mortiboy*,' '*The Golden Butterfly*,' '*The Chaplain of the Fleet*,' etc. etc. etc.

### PROLOGUE.—PART I.

It was the evening of a day in early June. The time was last year, and the place was Cambridge. The sun had been visible in the heavens, a gracious presence, actually a whole week—in itself a thing remarkable; the hearts of the most soured, even of landlords and farmers, were coming to believe again in the possibility of fine weather; the clergy were beginning to think that they might this year hold a real Harvest Thanksgiving instead of a sham; the trees at the Backs were in full foliage; the avenues of Trinity and Clare were splendid; beside them the trim lawns sloped to the margin of the Cam, here most glorious and proudest of English rivers, seeing that he laves the meadows of those ancient and venerable foundations, King's, Trinity, and St. John's, to say nothing of Queens' and Clare and Magdalen; men were lazily floating in canoes, or leaning over the bridges, or strolling about the walks, or lying on the grass; and among them—but not—oh! not with them—walked or rested many of the damsels of learned Newnham, chiefly in pairs, holding sweet converse

On mind and art,  
And labour and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land;

not neglecting the foundations of the Christian faith and other fashionable topics, which ladies nowadays handle with so much learning, originality, dexterity, and power.

We have, however, to do with only one pair, who were sitting



together on the banks opposite Trinity. These two were talking about a subject far more interesting than any concerning mind, or art, or philosophy, or the chances of the Senate House, or the future of Newnham: for they were talking about themselves and their own lives, and what they were to do each with that one life which happened, by the mere accident of birth, to belong to herself. It must be a curious subject for reflection in extreme old age, when everything has happened that is going to happen, including rheumatism, that, but for this accident, one's life might have been so very different.

'Because, Angela,' said the one who wore spectacles and looked older than she was, by reason of much pondering over books and perhaps too little exercise, 'because, my dear, we have but this one life before us, and if we make mistakes with it, or throw it away, or waste it, or lose our chances, it is such a dreadful pity. Oh, to think of the girls who drift and let every chance go by, and get nothing out of their lives at all—except babies' (she spoke of babies with great contempt). 'Oh! it seems as if every moment were precious: oh! it is a sin to waste an hour of it.'

She gasped and clasped her hands together with a sigh. She was not acting, not at all; this girl was that hitherto rare thing, a girl of study and of books; she was wholly possessed, like the great scholars of old, with the passion for learning.

'Oh! greedy person!' replied the other with a laugh, 'if you read all the books in the University library, and lose the enjoyment of sunshine, what shall it profit you, in the long-run?'

This one was a young woman of much finer physique than her friend. She was not short-sighted; but possessed, in fact, a pair of orbs of very remarkable clearness, steadiness, and brightness. They were not soft eyes, nor languishing eyes, nor sleepy eyes, nor downcast, shrinking eyes; they were wideawake, brown, honest eyes, which looked fearlessly upon all things, fair or foul. A girl does not live at Newnham two years for nothing, mind you; when she leaves that seat of learning, she has changed her mind about the model, the perfect, the ideal woman. More than that, she will change the minds of her sisters and her cousins: and there are going to be a great many Newnhams; and the spread of this revolution will be rapid; and the shrinking, obedient, docile, man-reverencing, curate-worshipping maiden of our youth will shortly vanish and be no more seen. And what will the curate do then, poor thing? Wherefore let the bishop look to certain necessary changes in the Marriage Service; and let the young men see that their own ideas change with the times, else there will be no sweethearts for them. More could I prophesy, but refrain.

This young lady owned, besides those mentioned above, many other points which will always be considered desirable at her age, whatever be the growth of feminine education (wherefore, courage, brothers!). In all these points she contrasted favourably with her companion. For her face was sunny, and fair to look upon; one of the younger clerical dons—now a scanty band, almost a Remnant—was reported to have said, after gazing upon that face, that he now understood, which he had never understood before, what Solomon meant when he compared his love's temples to a piece of pomegranate within her locks. No one asked him what *he* meant, but he was a mathematical man, and so he must have meant something, if it was only trigonometry. As to her figure, it was what a healthy, naturally dressed, and strong young woman's figure ought to be, and not more slender in the waist than was the figure of Venus or Mother Eve; and her limbs were elastic, so that she seemed when she walked as if she would like to run, jump, and dance, which, indeed, she would have greatly preferred, only at Newnham they 'take it out' at lawn tennis. And whatever might be the course of life marked out by herself, it was quite certain to the intelligent observer that before long Love the invincible—Love that laughs at plots, plans, conspiracies, and designs—would upset them all, and trace out quite another line of life for her, and most probably the most commonplace line of all.

'Your life, Constance,' she went on, 'seems to me the most happy and the most fortunate. How nobly you have vindicated the intellect of women by your degree!'

'No, my dear:' Constance shook her head sadly. 'No; only partly vindicated our intellect; remember I was but fifth Wrangler, and there were four men—men, Angela—above me. I wanted to be Senior.'

'Everybody knows that the fifth is always as good as the first.' Constance, however, shook her head at this daring attempt at consolation. 'At all events, Constance, you will go on to prove it by your original papers when you publish your researches. You will lecture like Hypatia; you will have the undergraduates leaving the men and crowding to your theatre. You will become the greatest mathematician in Cambridge; you will be famous for ever. You will do better than man himself, even in man's most exalted level of intellectual strength.'

The pale cheek of the student flushed.

'I do not expect to do better than men,' she replied humbly. 'It will be enough if I do as well. Yes, my dear, all my life, short or long, shall be given to science. I will have no love in it, or marriage, or—or—anything of that kind at all.'

'Nor will I,' said the other stoutly, yet with apparent effort. 'Marriage spoils a woman's career; we must live our life to its utmost, Constance.'

'We must, Angela. It is the only thing in this world of doubt that is a clear duty. I owe mine to science. You, my dear, to——'

She would have said to 'Political Economy,' but a thought checked her. For a singular thing had happened only the day before. This friend of hers, this Angela Messenger, who had recently illustrated the strength of woman's intellect by passing a really brilliant examination in that particular science, astonished her friends at a little informal meeting in the library by an oration. In this speech she went out of her way to pour contempt upon Political Economy. It was a so-called science, she said, not a science at all: a collection of theories impossible of proof. It treated of men and women as skittles, it ignored the principal motives of action, it had been put together for the most part by doctrinaires who lived apart, and knew nothing about men and less about women, and it was the favourite study, she cruelly declared, of her own sex, because it was the most easily crammed and made the most show. As for herself, she declared that for all the good it had done her, she might just as well have gone through a course of æsthetics or studied the symbols of advanced Ritualism.

Therefore, remembering the oration, Constance Woodcote hesitated. To what Cause (with a capital C) should Angela Messenger devote her life?

'I will tell you presently,' said Angela, 'how I shall begin my life. Where the beginning will lead me, I cannot tell.'

Then there was silence for a while. The sun sank lower and the setting rays fell upon the foliage, and every leaf showed like a leaf of gold, and the river lay in shadow and became ghostly, and the windows of Trinity library opposite to them glowed, and the New Court of St. John's at their left hand became like unto the palace of Kubla Khan.

'Oh!' sighed the young mathematician. 'I shall never be satisfied till Newnham crosses the river. We must have one of these colleges for ourselves. We must have King's. Yes, King's will be the best. And oh! how differently we shall live from the so-called students who are now smoking tobacco in each other's rooms, or playing billiards, or even cards—the superior sex!'

'As for us, we shall presently go back to our rooms, have a cup of tea and a talk, my dear. Then we shall go to bed. As regards the men, those of your mental level, Constance, do not, I suppose, play billiards; nor do they smoke tobacco. Undergraduates are

not all students, remember. Most of them are nothing but mere Pass-men who will become curates.'

Two points in this speech seem to call for remark. First, the singular ignorance of mankind, common to all women, which led the girl to believe that a great man of science is superior to the pleasures of weaker brethren; for they cannot understand the delights of fooling. The second point is—— but it may be left to those who read as they run.

Then they rose and walked slowly under the grand old trees of Trinity Avenue, facing the setting sun, so that when they came to the end and turned to the left, it seemed as if they plunged into night. And presently they came to the gates of Newnham, the newer Newnham, with its trim garden and Queen Anne mansion. It grates upon one that the beginnings of a noble and lasting reform should be housed in a palace built in the conceited fashion of the day. What will they say of it in fifty years, when the fashion has changed and new styles reign?

'Come,' said Angela, 'come into my room. Let my last evening in the dear place be spent with you, Constance.'

Angela's own room was daintily furnished and adorned with as many pictures, pretty things, books, and *bric-à-brac* as the narrow dimensions of a Newnham cell will allow. In a more advanced Newnham there will be two rooms for each student, and these will be larger.

The girls sat by the open window: the air was soft and sweet. A bunch of cowslips from the Coton meadows perfumed the room: there was the jug-jug of a nightingale in some tree not far off; opposite them were the lights of the other Newnham.

'The last night!' said Angela. 'I can hardly believe that I go down to-morrow.'

Then she was silent again.

'My life,' she went on, speaking softly in the twilight, 'begins to-morrow. What am I to do with it? Your own solution seems so easy because you are clever and you have no money, while I, who am—well, dear, not devoured by thirst for learning—have got so much. To begin with, there is the Brewery. You cannot escape from a big Brewery if it belongs to you. You cannot hide it away. Messenger, Marsden and Company's Stout, their XXX, their Old and Mild, their Bitter, their Family Ales (that particularly at eight-and-six the nine-gallon cask, if paid for on delivery), their drays, their huge horses, their strong men, whose very appearance advertises the beer, and makes the weak-kneed and the narrow-chested rush to Whitechapel—my dear, these things stare one in the face wherever you go. I am that Brewery, as you know.

I am Messenger, Marsden and Company, myself, the sole partner in what my lawyer sweetly calls the Concern. Nobody else is concerned in it. It is—alas!—my own Great Concern, a dreadful responsibility.'

'Why? Your people manage it for you.'

'Yes—oh! yes—they do. And whether they manage it badly or well I do not know; whether they make wholesome beer or bad, whether they treat their clerks and workmen generously or meanly, whether the name of the Company is beloved or hated, I do not know. Perhaps the very making of beer at all is a wickedness.'

'But—Angela,' the other interrupted; 'it is no business of yours. Naturally, wages are regulated by supply and——'

'No, my dear. That is political economy. I prefer the good old English plan. If I employ a man, and he works faithfully, I should like that man to feel that he grows every day worth to me more than his marketable value.'

Constance was silenced.

'Then, beside the Brewery,' Angela went on, 'there is an unconscionable sum of money in the Funds.'

'There, at least,' said her friend, 'you need feel no scruple of conscience.'

'But indeed I do; for how do I know that it is right to keep all this money idle? A hundred pounds saved and put into the Funds means three pounds a year. It is like a perennial stream flowing from a hidden reservoir in a hillside. But this stream, in my case, does no good at all. It neither fertilises the soil nor is it drunk by man or beast, nor does it turn mills, nor is it a beautiful thing to look upon, nor does its silver current flow by banks of flowers or fall in cascades. It all runs away, and makes another reservoir in another hillside. My dear, it is a stream of compound interest, which is constantly getting deeper and broader and stronger, and yet is never of the least use, and turns no wheels. Now, what am I to do with this money?'

'Endow Newnham; there, at least, is something practical.'

'I will found some scholarships, if you please, later on, when you have made your own work felt. Again, there are my houses in the East End.'

'Sell them.'

'That is only to shift the responsibility. My dear, I have streets of houses. They all lie about Whitechapel way. My grandfather, John Messenger, bought houses, I believe, just as other people buy apples, by the peck, or some larger measure, a reduction being made on taking a quantity. There they are, and mostly inhabited.'

'You have agents, I suppose?' said Constance unsympathisingly. 'It is their duty to see that the houses are well kept.'

'Yes, I have agents. But they cannot absolve me from responsibility.'

'Then,' asked Constance, 'what do you mean to do?'

'I am a native almost of Whitechapel. My grandfather, who succeeded to the Brewery, was born there—his father was also a Brewer: his grandfather is, I believe, prehistoric: he lived there long after his son, my father, was born. When he moved to Bloomsbury Square he thought he was getting into quite a fashionable quarter; and he only went to Portman Square because he desired me to go into society. I am so rich that I shall quite certainly be welcomed in society. But, my dear, Whitechapel and its neighbourhood are my proper sphere. Why, my very name! I reek of beer; I am all beer; my blood is beer. Angela Marsden Messenger! What could more plainly declare my connection with Messenger, Marsden and Company? I only wonder that he did not call me Marsden-and-Company Messenger.'

'But—Angela . . .'

'He would, Constance, if he had thought of it. For, you see, I was the heiress from the very beginning, because my father died before my birth. And my grandfather intended me to become the perfect Brewer, if a woman can attain to so high an ideal. Therefore I was educated in the necessary and fitting lines. They taught me the industries of England, the arts and manufactories, mathematics, accounts, the great outlets of trade, book-keeping, mechanics—all those things that are practical. How it happened that I was allowed to learn music I do not know. Then, when I grew up, I was sent here by him, because the very air of Cambridge, he thought, makes people exact; and women are so prone to be inexact. I was to read while I was here all the books about Political and Social Economy. I have also learned for business purposes two or three languages. I am now finished. I know all the theories about people, and I don't believe any of them will work. Therefore, my dear, I shall get to know the people before I apply them.'

'Was your grandfather a student of Political Economy?'

'Not at all. But he had a respect for justice, and he wanted me to be just. It is so difficult, he used to say, for a woman to be just. For either she flies into a rage and punishes with excess, or she takes pity and forgives. As for himself, he was as hard as nails, and the people knew it.'

'And your project?'

'It is very simple. I efface myself. I vanish. I disappear.'

‘What?’

‘If anybody asks where I am, no one will know, except you, my dear; and you will not tell.’

‘You will be in——’

‘In Whitechapel, or thereabouts. Your Angela will be a dressmaker, and she will live by herself and become—what her great-grandmother was—one of the people.’

‘You will not like it at all.’

‘Perhaps not; but I am weary of theories, facts, statistics. I want flesh and blood. I want to feel myself a part of this striving, eager, anxious humanity, on whose labours I live in comfort, by whom I have been educated, to whom I owe all, and for whom I have done nothing—no, nothing at all, selfish wretch that I am!’

She clasped her hands with a fine gesture of remorse.

‘Oh! woman of silence,’ she cried; ‘you sit upon the heights, and you can disregard—because it is your right—the sorrows and the joys of the world. But I cannot. I belong to the People—with a great, big P, my dear—I cannot bear to go on living by their toil and giving nothing in return. What a dreadful thing is a She-Dives!’

‘I confess,’ said Constance, coldly, ‘that I have always regarded wealth as a means for leading the higher life—the life of study and research—unencumbered by the sordid aims and mean joys of the vulgar herd.’

‘It is possible and right for you to live apart, my dear. It is impossible, because it would be wrong, for me.’

‘But—alone? You will venture into the dreadful region alone?’

‘Quite alone, Constance.’

‘And—and—your reputation, Angela?’

Angela laughed merrily.

‘As for my reputation, my dear, it may take care of itself. Those of my friends who think I am not to be trusted may transfer their affection to more worthy objects. The first thing in the emancipation of the sex, Constance, is equal education. The next is——’

‘What?’ for Angela paused.

She drew forth from her pocket a small bright instrument of steel, which glittered in the twilight. Not a revolver, dear readers.

‘The next,’ she said, brandishing the weapon before Constance’s eyes, ‘is—the LATCH-KEY.’

## PROLOGUE.—PART II.

THE time was eleven in the forenoon ; the season was the month of roses ; the place was a room on the first floor at the Park-end of Piccadilly—a noisy room, because the windows were open, and there was a great thunder and rattle of cabs, omnibuses, and all kinds of vehicles. When this noise became, as it sometimes did, intolerable, the occupant of the room shut his double windows, and immediately there was a great calm, with a melodious roll of distant wheels, like the buzzing of bees about the marigolds on a summer afternoon. With the double window a man may calmly sit down amid even the roar of Cheapside, or the never-ending cascade of noise at Charing Cross.

The room was furnished with taste ; the books on the shelves were well bound, as if the owner took a proper pride in them, as indeed was the case. There were two or three good pictures ; there was a girl's head in marble ; there were cards and invitations lying on the mantelshelf and in a rack beside the clock. Everybody could tell at the first look of the room that it was a bachelor's den. Also because nothing was new, and because there were none of the peacockeries, whims and fancies, absurdities, fads and fashions, gimcrackeries—the presence of which does always and infallibly proclaim the chamber of a young man—this room manifestly belonged to a bachelor who was old in the profession. In fact, the owner of the chambers, of which this was the breakfast, morning, and dinner room, whenever he dined at home, was seated in an armchair beside a breakfast table, looking straight before him, with a face filled with anxiety. An honest, ugly, pleasing, rugged, attractive face, whose features were carved one day when Dame Nature was benevolently disposed, but had a blunt chisel.

'I always told him,' he muttered, 'that he should learn the whole of his family history as soon as he was three-and-twenty years of age. One must keep such promises. Yet it would have been better that he should never know. But then it might have been found out, and that would have been far worse. Yet, how could it have been found out ? No ; that is ridiculous.'

He mused in silence. In his fingers he held a cigar which he had lit, but allowed to go out again. The morning paper was lying on the table, unopened.

'How will the boy take it ?' he asked ; 'will he take it crying ? Or will he take it laughing ?'

He smiled, picturing to himself the 'boy's' astonishment.

Looking at the man more closely, one became aware that he



was really a very pleasant-looking person. He was about five-and-forty years of age, and he wore a full beard and moustache, after the manner of his contemporaries, with whom a beard is still considered a manly ornament to the face. The beard was brown, but it had begun to show, as wine merchants say of port, the 'appearance of age.' In some light, there was more grey than brown. His dark-brown hair, however, retained its original thickness of thatch, and was as yet untouched by any streak of grey. Seeing that he belonged to one of the oldest and best of English families, one might have expected something of that delicacy of feature which some of us associate with birth. But, as has already been said, his face was rudely chiselled, his complexion was ruddy, and he looked as robust as a plough-boy; yet he had the air of an English gentleman, and that ought to satisfy anybody. And he was the younger son of a Duke, being by courtesy Lord Jocelyn Le Breton.

While he was thus meditating, there was a quick step on the stair, and the subject of his thoughts entered the room.

This interesting young man was a much more aristocratic person to look upon than his senior. He paraded, so to speak, at every point, the thoroughbred air. His thin and delicate nose, his clear eye, his high though narrow forehead, his well-cut lip, his firm chin, his pale cheek, his oval face, the slim figure, the thin, long fingers, the spring of his walk, the poise of his head—what more could one expect even from the descendant of All the Howards? But this morning the pallor of his cheek was flushed as if with some disquieting news.

'Good morning, Harry,' said Lord Jocelyn quietly.

Harry returned the greeting. Then he threw upon the table a small packet of papers.

'There, sir, I have read them; thank you for letting me see them.'

'Sit down, boy, and let us talk; will you have a cigar? No? A cigarette, then? No? You are probably a little upset by this—new—unexpected revelation?'

'A *little* upset!' repeated the young man, with a short laugh.

'To be sure—to be sure—one could expect nothing else; now sit down, and let us talk over the matter calmly.'

The young man sat down, but he did not present the appearance of one inclined to talk over the matter calmly.

'In novels,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'it is always the good fortune of young gentlemen brought up in ignorance of their parentage to turn out, when they do discover their origin, the heirs to an illustrious name; I have always admired that in novels. In your







*'There, sir, I have read them.'*



case, my poor Harry, the reverse is the case ; the distinction ought to console you.'

'Why was I not told before?'

'Because the boyish brain is more open to prejudice than that of the adult: because, among your companions, you certainly would have felt at a disadvantage had you known yourself to be the son of a ——'

'You always told me,' said Harry, 'that my father was in the army!'

'What do you call a Sergeant in a line regiment, then?'

'Oh! of course, but among gentlemen—I mean—among the set with whom I was brought up, to be in the army means to have a commission.'

'Yes; that was my pardonable deception. I thought that you would respect yourself more if you felt that your father, like the fathers of your friends, belonged to the upper class. Now, my dear boy, you will respect yourself just as much, although you know that he was but a Sergeant, and a brave fellow who fell at my side in the Indian Mutiny.'

'And my mother?'

'I did not know her; she was dead before I found you out, and took you from your Uncle Bunker.'

'Uncle Bunker!' Harry laughed, with a little bitterness. 'Uncle Bunker! Fancy asking one's Uncle Bunker to dine at the club! What is he by trade?'

'He is something near a big Brewery, a Brewery Boom, as the Americans say. What he actually is, I do not quite know. He lives, if I remember rightly, at a place an immense distance from here, called Stepney.'

'Do you know anything more about my father's family?'

'No! the Sergeant was a tall, handsome, well set-up man; but I know nothing about his connections. His name, if that is any help to you, was, was—in fact'—here Lord Jocelyn assumed an air of ingratiating sweetness—'was—Goslett—Goslett; not a bad name, I think, pronounced with perhaps a leaning to an accent on the last syllable. Don't you agree with me, Harry?'

'Oh! yes, it will do. Better than Bunker, and not so good as Le Breton. As for my Christian name, now?'

'There I ventured on one small variation.'

'Am I not, then, even Harry?'

'Yes, yes, yes, you are—now; formerly you were Harry without the aitch. It is the custom of the neighbourhood in which you were born.'

'I see! If I go back among my own people, I shall be, then, once more 'Arry?'

'Yes; and shout on penny steamers, and brandish pint bottles of stout, and sing along the streets, in simple abandonment to Arcadian joy; and trample on flowers; and break pretty things for wantonness; and exercise a rude but effective wit, known among the ancients as Fescennine, upon passing ladies; and get drunk o' nights; and walk the streets with a pipe in your mouth. That is what you would be, if you went back, my dear child.'

Harry laughed.

'After all,' he said, 'this is a very difficult position. I can no longer go about pretending anything; I must tell people.'

'Is that absolutely necessary?'

'Quite necessary. It will be a deuce of a business, explaining.'

'Shall we tell it to one person, and let him be the town crier?'

'That, I suppose, would be the best plan; meantime, I could retire, while I made some plans for the future.'

'Perhaps, if you really must tell the truth, it would be well to go out of town for a bit.'

'As for myself,' Harry continued, 'I suppose I shall get over the wrench after a bit. Just for the moment I feel knocked out of time.'

'Keep the secret, then; let it be one between you and me only, Harry; let no one know.'

But he shook his head.

'Everybody must know. Those who refuse to keep up the acquaintance of a private soldier's son—well, then, a non-commissioned officer's son—will probably let me know their decision, some way or other. Those who do not ——' he paused.

'Nonsense, boy; who cares nowadays what a man is by birth? Is not this great city full of people who go anywhere, and are nobody's sons? Look here, and here'—he tossed half-a-dozen cards of invitation across the table—'can you tell me who these people were twenty years ago—or these—or these?'

'No: I do not care in the least who they were. I care only that they shall know who I am; I will not, for my part, pretend to be what I am not.'

'I believe you are right, boy. Let the world laugh if they please, and have done with it.'

Harry began to walk up and down the room; he certainly did not look the kind of man to give in; to try hiding things away. Quite the contrary. And he laughed—he took it laughing.

'I suppose it will sound comic at first,' he said, 'until people

get used to it. Do you know what he turns out to be? That kind of thing: after all, we think too much about what people say—what does it matter what they say or how they say it? If they like to laugh, they can. Who shall be the town crier?’

‘I was thinking,’ said Lord Jocelyn slowly, ‘of calling to-day upon Lady Wimbleton.’

The young man laughed, with a little heightening of his colour.

‘Of course—a very good person, an excellent person, and to-morrow it will be all over London—there are one or two things,’ he went on after a moment, ‘that I do not understand from the papers which you put into my hands last night.’

‘What are those things?’ Lord Jocelyn for a moment looked uneasy.

‘Well—perhaps it is impertinent to ask. But—when Mr. Bunker, the respectable Uncle Bunker, traded me away, what did he get for me?’

‘Every bargain has two sides,’ said Lord Jocelyn. ‘You know what I got, you want to know what the honourable Bunker got. Harry, on that point I must refer you to the gentleman himself.’

‘Very good. Then I come to the next difficulty—a staggerer. What did you do it for? One moment, sir—’ for Lord Jocelyn seemed about to reply. ‘One moment. You were rich, you were well born, you were young. What on earth made you pick a boy out of the gutter and bring him up like a gentleman?’

‘You are twenty-three, Harry, and yet you ask for motives. My dear boy, have you not learned the golden rule? In all human actions look for the basest motive, and attribute that. If you see any reason for stopping short of quite the lowest spurs to action, such as revenge, hatred, malice, and envy, suppose the next lowest, and you will be quite safe. That next lowest is—*son attesse, ma vanité.*’

‘Oh!’ replied Harry, ‘yet I fail to see how a child of the lowest classes could supply any satisfaction for even the next lowest of human motives.’

‘It was partly in this way. Mind, I do not for one moment pretend to answer the whole of your question. Men’s motives, thank heaven, are so mixed up, that no one can be quite a saint, while no one is altogether a sinner. Nature is a leveller, which is a comfort to us who are born in levelling times. In those days I was by way of being a kind of Radical. Not a Radical such as those who delight mankind in these happier days. But I had Liberal leanings, and thought I had ideas. When I was a boy of



twelve or so, there were the '48 theories floating about the air; some of them got into my brain and stuck there. Men used to believe that a great time was coming—perhaps I heard a whisper of it; perhaps I was endowed with a greater faculty for credulity than my neighbours, and believed in humanity. However, I do not seek to explain. It may have occurred to me—I do not say it did—but I have a kind of recollection as if it did—one day after I had seen you, then in the custody of the respectable Bunker, that it would be an instructive and a humorous thing to take a boy of the multitude and bring him up in all the culture, the tastes, the ideas of ourselves—you and me, for instance, Harry. This idea may have seized upon me, so that the more I thought of it, the better pleased I was with it. I may have pictured such a boy so taught, so brought up, with such tastes, returning to his own people. Disgust, I may have said, will make him a prophet; and such a prophet as the world has never yet seen. He would be like a follower of the Old Man of the Mountain. He would never cease to dream of the paradise he had seen: he would never cease to tell of it; he would be always leading his friends upward to the same levels on which he had once stood.'

'Humph!' said Harry.

'Yes, I know,' Lord Jocelyn went on. 'I ought to have foretold that the education I prepared for you would have unfitted you for the rôle of prophet. I am not disappointed in you, Harry—quite the reverse. I now see that what has happened has been only what I should have expected. By some remarkable accident, you possess an appearance such as is generally believed to belong to persons of long-continued gentle descent. By a still more remarkable accident, all your tastes prove to be those of the cultured classes; the blood of the Bunkers has, in yourself, assumed the most azure hue.'

'That is very odd,' said Harry.

'It is a very remarkable thing, indeed,' continued Lord Jocelyn gravely. 'I have never ceased to wonder at this phenomenon. However, I was unable to send you to a public school on account of the necessity, as I thought, of concealing your parentage. But I gave you instruction of the best, and found for you companions—as you know, among the——'

'Yes,' said Harry. 'My companions were gentlemen, I suppose; I learned from them.'

'Perhaps. Still, the earthenware pot cannot become a brass pot, whatever he may pretend. You were good metal from the beginning.'

'You are now, Harry,' he went on, 'three-and-twenty. You

are master of three foreign languages; you have travelled on the Continent and in America; you are a good rider, a good shot, a good fencer, a good dancer. You can paint a little, fiddle a little, dance a great deal, act pretty well, speak pretty well; you can, I dare say, make love as becomes a gentleman; you can write very fair verses; you are good-looking; you have the *air noble*; you are not a prig; you are not an æsthete; you possess your share of common sense.'

'One thing you have omitted which, at the present juncture, may be more useful than any of these things.'

'What is that?'

'You were good enough to give me a lathe, and to have me instructed in the mysteries of turning. I am a practical cabinet-maker, if need be.'

'But why should this be of use to you?'

'Because, Lord Jocelyn'—Harry ran and leaned over the table with a sweet smile of determination on his face—'because I am going back to my own people for a while, and it may be that the trade of cabinet-making may prove a very backbone of strength to me among them—'

'Harry—you would not—indeed, you could not go back to Bunker?' Lord Jocelyn asked this question with every outward appearance of genuine alarm.

'I certainly would. My very kind guardian and patron, would you stand in my way? I want to see those people from where I am sprung: I want to learn how they differ from you and your kin. I must compare myself with them—I must prove the brotherhood of humanity.'

'You will go? Yes—I see you will—it is in your eyes. Go then, Harry. But return to me soon. The slender fortune of a younger son shall be shared with you so long as I live, and given to you when I die. Do not stay among them. There are, indeed—at least, I suppose so,—all sorts and conditions of men. But to me, and to men brought up like you and me, I do not understand how there can be any but one sort and one condition. Come back soon, boy. Believe me—no—do not believe me—prove it yourself: in the social pyramid, the greatest happiness, Harry, lies near the top.'

## CHAPTER I.

### NEWS FOR HIS LORDSHIP.

'I HAVE news for your lordship,' said Mrs. Bormalack, at the breakfast table, 'something that will cheer you up a bit. We are to have an addition to our family.'

His lordship nodded his head, meaning that he would receive her news without more delay than was necessary, but that at present his mind was wholly occupied with a contest between one of his teeth and a crust. The tooth was an outlying one, all its lovely companions having withered and gone, and it was undefended; the crust was unyielding. For the moment no one could tell what might be the result.

Her ladyship replied for him.

Lady Davenant was a small woman, if you go by inches; her exalted rank gave her, however, a dignity designed for very much larger persons; yet she carried it with ease. She was by no means young, and her hair was thin as well as grey; her face, which was oval and delicately curved, might formerly have been beautiful; the eyes were bright and eager, and constantly in motion, as is often the case with restless and nervous persons; her lips were thin and as full of independent action as her eyes; she had thin hands, so small that they might have belonged to a child of eight; and she might boast, when inclined for vaunting, the narrowest and most sloping shoulders that ever were seen, so sloping that people unaccustomed to her were wont to tremble lest the whole of her dress should suddenly slide straight down those shoulders, as down a slope of ice; and strange ladies, impelled by this apprehension, had been known to ask her in a friendly whisper if she could thoroughly depend upon the pins at her throat. As Mrs. Bormalack often said, speaking of her noble boarders among her friends, those shoulders of her ladyship were Quite a Feature. Next to the pride of having at her table such guests—who, however, did not give in to the good old English custom of paying double prices for having a title—was the distinction of pointing to those unique shoulders and of talking about them.

Her ladyship had a shrill, reedy voice, and spoke loudly. It was remarked by the most superficial observer, moreover, that she possessed a very strong American accent.

‘At our first boarding-house,’ she said, replying indirectly to the landlady’s remark, ‘at our first boarding-house, which was in Wellclose Square, next to the Board Schools, there was a man who once *actually* slapped his lordship on the back. And then he laughed! To be sure, he was only a Dane, but the disrespect was just the same.’

‘My dear,’ said his lordship, who now spoke, having compromised matters with the crust, ‘the ignominy of being slapped on the back by a powerful sea captain is hardly to be weighed in comparison with the physical pain it causes.’

‘We are quite sure, however, Mrs. Bormalack,’ the lady went

on, 'that you will admit none under your roof but those prepared to respect rank; we want no levellers or mischievous Radicals for our companions.'

'It is to be a young lady,' said Mrs. Bormalack.

'Young ladies, at all events, do not slap gentlemen on the back, whether they are noblemen or not,' said his lordship kindly. 'We shall be happy to welcome her, ma'am.'

This ornament of the Upper House was a big, fat man, with a face like a full moon. His features were not distinctly aristocratic; his cheeks were flabby and his nose broad; also he had a double chin. His long hair was a soft, creamy white, the kind of white which in old age follows a manhood of red hair. He sat in an arm-chair at the end of the table, with his elbows on the arms, as if he desired to get as much rest out of the chair as possible. His eyes were very soft and dreamy; his expression was that of a man who has been accustomed to live in the quieter parts of the world. He, too, spoke with a marked American accent and with slowness, as if measuring his words and appreciating himself their importance. The dignity of his manner was not wholly due to his position, but in great measure to his former profession. For his lordship had not always rejoiced in his present dignity, nor, in fact, had he been brought up to it. Persons intending to become peers of Great Britain do not, as a rule, first spend more than forty years as schoolmasters in their native town. And just as clergymen, and especially young clergymen, love to talk loud, because it makes people remember that they are in the presence of those whose wisdom demands attention, so old schoolmasters speak slowly because their words—even the lightest, which are usually pretty heavy—have got to be listened to, under penalties.

As soon, however, as he began to 'enjoy the title,' the ex-schoolmaster addressed himself with some care to the cultivation of a manner which he thought due to his position. It was certainly pompous; it was intended to be affable; it was naturally, because he was a man of a most kind disposition and an excellent heart, courteous and considerate.

'I am rejoiced, Mrs. Bormalack,' he went on grandly, and with a bow, 'that we are to be cheered in our domestic circle by the addition of a young lady. It is an additional proof, if any were needed, of the care with which you consider the happiness of your guests.' The Professor, who owed for five weeks, murmured that no one felt it more than himself. 'Sometimes, ma'am, I own that even with the delightful society of yourself' ('Oh, my lord, your lordship is too kind,' said Mrs. Bormalack) 'and of the accomplished Professor,'—here he bowed to the Professor, who nodded

and spread out his hands professionally, 'and of the learned Mr. Daniel Fagg,'—here he bowed to Mr. Fagg, who took no notice at all, because he was thinking of his triangles and was gazing straight before him—'and of Mr. Josephus Coppin,'—here he bowed to Josephus Coppin, who humbly inclined his head without a smile, 'and of Mr. Maliphant,'—here he bowed to Mr. Maliphant, who with a breakfast knife was trying to make a knobly crust assume the shape of a human head, in fact, the head of Mr. Gladstone, 'and of Mr. Harry Goslett, who is not with us so much as we could desire of so sprightly a young man; and surrounded as we are by all the gaiety and dissipation and splendour of London, I sometimes suspect that we are not always so cheerful as we might be.'

'Give me,' said his wife, folding her little hands and looking round her with a warlike expression, as if inviting contradiction, 'give me Canaan City, New Hampshire, for gaiety.'

Nobody combated this position, nor did anybody reply at all, unless the pantomime of the Professor was intended for a reply by gesture, like the learned Thaumast. For, with precision and abstracted air, he rolled up a little ball of bread, about as big as a marble, placed it in the palm of his left hand, closed his fingers upon it, and then opened them, showing that the ball had vanished. Then he executed the slightest possible shrug of his shoulders, spread out his hands, and nodded to his lordship, saying, with a sweet smile,—

'Pretty thing, isn't it?'

'I hope, sir, that she will be pretty,' said his lordship, thinking of the young lady. 'To look at a pretty face is as good as a day of sunshine.'

'She is a beautiful girl,' Mrs. Bormalack replied with enthusiasm, 'and I am sure she must be as good as she is pretty; because she paid three months in advance. With a piano, too, which she will play herself. She is a dressmaker by trade, and she wants to set herself up in a genteel way. And she's got a little money, she says;' a sweet smile crossed her face as she thought that most of this little money would come into her own pocket.

'A dressmaker!' cried her ladyship. 'Do tell! I was in that line myself before I married. That was long before we began to enjoy the title. You don't know, ma'am'—here she dropped her voice—'you don't know how remarkably fond his lordship is of a pretty face; choice with them, too. Not every face pleases him. Oh! you wouldn't believe how particular. Which shows his aristocratic descent; because we all know what his ancestors were.'

'To be sure,' said the landlady, nodding significantly. 'We all know what they were. Rovers to a man—I mean a lord. And

as for the young lady, she will be here this evening, in time for tea. Shrimps and Sally Lunn, my lord. And her name is Miss Kennedy. Respectable, if poor; and illustrious ancestors is more than we can all of us have, nor yet deserve.'

Here the Professor rose, having finished his breakfast. One might have noticed that he had extremely long and delicate fingers, and that they seemed always in movement; also that he had a way of looking at you as if he meant you to look straight and steady into his eyes, and not to go rolling your eyes about in the frivolous, irresponsible way affected by some people. He walked slowly to the window; then, as if seized with an irresistible impulse to express his feelings in pantomime, or else, it may be, to try an experiment, returned to the table, and asked for the loan of his lordship's pocket-handkerchief, which was a large red silk one, well fitted for the purpose. How he conveyed a saucer unseen from the table into that handkerchief, and how that saucer got into the nobleman's coat-tail pocket, were things known only to himself. Yet familiarity breeds contempt, and though everybody looked on, nobody expressed delight or astonishment, for this exhibition of magic and spells went on every day, and whenever the Professor was among them. He moved about accompanied, so to speak, by a legion of invisible attendants and servants, who conveyed, hid, brought back, uncovered, discovered, recovered, lost, found, rapped, groaned, cried, whistled, sang, moved chairs and tables, and, in fact, behaved as only a troop of well-drilled elves can behave. He was a young man of twenty-five, and he had a great gift of silence. By trade he was a Professor of legerdemain. Other Professors there are who hold up the light of this science, and hand it down to posterity undimmed; but none with such an ardent love for their work as Professor Climo. For he practised all day long, except when he was reading the feats of the illustrious conjurers, sorcerers, necromancers, and wizards of old time, or inventing new combinations, traps for the credulous, and contrivances to make that which was not seen like unto that which was. The East End of London is not the richest field for such performers; but he was young, and he lived in hope—very often, when there were no engagements—upon it. At such times he became a simple lodger, instead of a boarder, at Mrs. Bormalack's, and went without any meals.

The situation of this boarding-house, poetically described by his lordship as in the midst of the gaiety of London, was in the far East, in that region of London which is less known to Englishmen than if it were situated in the wildest part of Colorado, or among the pine forests of British Columbia. It stood, in fact, upon Stepney

Green, a small strip of Eden which has been visited by few, indeed, of those who do not live in its immediate vicinity. Yet, it is a romantic spot.

Two millions of people, or thereabouts, live in the East End of London. That seems a good-sized population for an utterly unknown town. They have no institutions of their own to speak of, no public buildings of any importance, no municipality, no gentry, no carriages, no soldiers, no picture-galleries, no theatres, no opera—they have nothing. It is the fashion to believe that they are all paupers, which is a foolish and mischievous belief, as we shall presently see. Probably there is no such spectacle in the whole world as that of this immense, neglected, forgotten great city of East London. It is even neglected by its own citizens, who have never yet perceived their abandoned condition. They are Londoners, it is true, but they have no part or share of London; its wealth, its splendours, its honours exist not for them. They see nothing of any splendours; even the Lord Mayor's show goeth westward: the city lies between them and the greatness of England. They are beyond the wards, and cannot become aldermen; the rich London merchants go north and south and west; but they go not east. Nobody goes east; no one wants to see the place; no one is curious about the way of life in the east. Books on London pass it over; it has little or no history; great men are not buried in its churchyards, which are not even ancient, and crowded by citizens as obscure as those who now breathe the upper airs about them. If anything happens in the east, people at the other end have to stop and think before they can remember where the place may be.

The house was old, built of red bricks with a 'shell' decoration over the door. It contained room for about eight boarders, who had one sitting-room in common. This was the breakfast-room, a meal at which all were present; the dining-room—but nobody except his lordship and his wife dined at home; the tea-room—but tea was too early for most of the boarders; and the supper-room. After supper tobacco was tolerated. The boarders were generally men, and mostly elderly men of staid and quiet manners, with whom the evening pipe was the conclusion and solace of the day. It was not like the perpetual incense of a tap-room, and yet the smell of tobacco was never absent from the room, lingering about the folds of the dingy curtain, which served for both summer and winter, clinging to the horsehair sofa, to the leather of the chairs, and to the rusty table-cloth.

The furniture was old and mean. The wall-paper had once been crimson, but was now only dark; the ceiling had for many years wanted white-washing badly; the door and windows wanted paint;

ing; the windows always wanted cleaning; the rope of one of the blinds was broken; and the blind itself, not nearly so white as it might have been, was pinned half-way up. Everything was shabby; everything wanted polishing, washing, brightening up.

A couple of arm-chairs stood, when meals were not going on, one on either side of the fireplace—one being reserved for his lordship, and the other for his wife; they were, like the sofa, of horsehair, and slippery. There was a long table covered by a faded red cloth; the carpet was a Brussels once of a warm crimson, now worn threadbare; the hearthrug was worn into holes; one or two of the chairs had broken out and showed glimpses of stuffing. The sideboard was of old-fashioned build, and a shiny black by reason of its age; there were two or three hanging shelves filled with books, the property of his lordship, who loved reading; the mantel-shelf was decorated by a small collection of pipes; and above it hung a portrait of the late Samuel Bormalack, formerly a Collector in the great Brewing House of Messenger, Marsden and Company.

His widow, who carried on the house, was a comfortable—a serenely comfortable woman, who regarded the world from the optimist's point of view. Perfect health and a tolerably prosperous business, where the returns are regular though the profits are small, make the possessor agree with Pope and *Candide* that everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Impossible not to be contented, happy, and religious, when your wishes are narrowed to a tidy dinner, a comfortable supper with a little something hot, boarders who pay up regular, do not grumble, and go to bed sober; and a steady hope that you will not 'get something,' by which of course is meant that you may not fall ill of any disagreeable or painful disease. To 'get something' is one of the pretty euphemisms of our daily speech.

She had had one or two unlucky accidents, such as the case of Captain Saffrey, who stayed two months, and drank enough beer to float a three-decker, and then sailed away, promising to pay, and would have done so—for he was an honest man—but had the misfortune to fall overboard while in liquor. But her present boarders seemed most respectable, and she was at ease.

Of course, the persons of greatest consideration among them were the noble pair who enjoyed the title. Rank is respected, if you please, even at the East End of London, and perhaps more there than in fashionable quarters, because it is so rare. King John, it is true, had once a palace at Stepnéy; but that is a long time to look back upon, and even the oldest inhabitant can now not remember to have been kicked by the choleric monarch. (Then the



Marquis of Worcester had once a great house here, what time the sainted Charles was ripening things for a row Royal. That house is gone too, and I do not know where it used to stand. From the time of this East End Marquis to the arrival of Lord and Lady Davenant, last year, there have been no resident members of the English aristocracy, and no member of the foreign nobility, with the exception of a certain dusky Marquis of Chouffleur, from Hayti, who is reported on good authority to have once lived in these parts for six months, thinking he was in the politest and most fashionable suburb of London. He is further said to have carried on with Satanic wildness in Limehouse and the West India Dock Road of an evening. A Japanese, too, certainly once went to an hotel in America Square, which is not quite the East End, and said he was a Prince in his own country. He stayed a week, and drank champagne all day long. Then he decamped without paying the bill; and when the landlord went to the Embassy to complain, he thought it was the Ambassador himself, until he discovered that all Japanese are exactly alike. Wherefore he desisted from any further attempt to identify the missing Prince for want of the missing link, namely, some distinctive feature.

The illustrious pair had now been in the House for six weeks. Previously they had spent some time in Wellclose Square, which is no doubt well known to fashionable readers, and lies contiguous to St. George's Street. Here happened that accident of the back-slapping so feelingly alluded to by her ladyship. They were come from America to take up an old family title which had been in abeyance for two or three generations. They appeared to be poor, but able to find the modest weekly sum asked by Mrs. Bormalack; and in order to secure her confidence and goodwill, they paid every week in advance. They drank nothing but water, but, to make up, his lordship ate a great deal, especially at breakfast, and they asked for strange things, unknown to English households. In other respects they gave no kind of trouble, were easily satisfied, never grumbled, and were affable. For their rank they certainly dressed shabbily, but high social station is sometimes found coupled with eccentricity. Doubtless Lord Davenant had his reasons for going about in a coat white at the seams and shiny at the back, which, being made of sympathetic stuff, and from long habit, had assumed the exact shape of his noble back and shoulders, with a beautiful model of his illustrious elbows. For similarly good and sufficient reasons Lady Davenant wore that old black gown and those mended gloves and —; but it is cruel to enumerate the shortcomings of her attire.

Perhaps on account of his public character, the Professor

would rank in the House after his lordship. Nothing confers greatness more quickly than an unabashed appearance upon a platform. Mr. Maliphant, however, who had travelled and could relate tales of adventure, might dispute precedence with him. He was now a carver of figure-heads for ships. It is an old and honourable trade, but in these latter days it has decayed. He had a small yard at Limehouse, where he worked all by himself, turning out heads in the rough, so that they might be transformed into a beauteous goddess, or a Saucy Poll, or a bearded Neptune, as the owners might prefer. He was now an old man, with a crumpled and million-lined face, but active still and talkative. His memory played him tricks, and he took little interest in new things. He had a habit, too, which disconcerted people unaccustomed to him, of thinking one part of a reminiscence to himself and saying the rest aloud, so that one got only the torso or mangled trunk of the story, or the head, or the feet, with or without the tail, which is the point.

The learned Daniel Fagg, rapt always in contemplation, was among them but not of them. He was lately arrived from Australia, bringing with him a Discovery which took away the breath of those who heard it, and filled all the scholars and learned men of Europe with envy and hatred, so that they combined and formed a general conspiracy to keep him down, and to prevent the publication of his great book, lest the world should point the finger of scorn at them, and laugh at the blindness of its great ones. Daniel himself said so, and an oppressed man generally knows his oppressor. He went away every morning after breakfast, and returned for tea. He was believed to occupy the day in spreading a knowledge of his Discovery, the nature of which was unknown at the boarding-house, among clergymen and other scholars. In the evening he sat over a Hebrew Bible and a dictionary, and spoke to no one. A harmless man, but soured and disappointed with the cold reception of his Great Discovery.

Another boarder was the unfortunate Josephus Coppin, who was a clerk in the great brewing-house of Messenger, Marsden and Company. He had been there for forty years, being now fifty-five years of age, grey, and sad of face, because, for some reason unknown to the world, he was not advanced, but remained for ever among the juniors at a salary of thirty shillings a week. Other men of his own standing were Chief Brewers, Collectors, and Chief Accountants. He was almost where he had started. The young men came and mounted the ladder of promotion, passing him one after the other; he alone remained upon the rung which he had reached one day, now thirty years bygone, when a certain

thing happened, the consequences of which were to keep him down, to ruin his prospects, to humiliate and degrade him, to sadden and embitter his whole life. Lastly, there was a young man, the only young man among them, one Harry Goslett by name, who had quite recently joined the boarding-house. He was a nephew of Mr. Coppin, and was supposed to be looking for a place of business.

But he was an uncertain boarder. He paid for his dinner, but never dined at home; he had brought with him a lathe, which he set up in a little garden-house, and here he worked by himself, but in a fitful, lazy way, as if it mattered nothing whether he worked or not. He seemed to prefer strolling about the place, looking around him as if he had never seen things before, and he was wont to speak of familiar objects as if they were strange and rare. These eccentricities were regarded as due to his having been to America. A handsome young man and cheerful, which made it a greater pity that he was so idle.

On this morning the first to start for the day's business was Daniel Fagg. He put his Hebrew Bible on the bookshelf, took out a memorandum-book and the stump of a pencil, made an entry, and then counted out his money, which amounted to eight-and-sixpence, with a sigh. He was a little man, about sixty years of age, and his thin hair was sandy in colour. His face was thin, and he looked hungry and under-fed. I believe, in fact, that he seldom had money enough for dinner, and so went without. Nothing was remarkable in his face, except a pair of very large and thick eyebrows, also of sandy hue, which is unusual, and produces a very curious effect. With these he was wont to frown tremendously as he went along, frightening the little children into fits; when he was not frowning, he looked dejected. It must have been an unhappy condition of things which made the poor man thus alternate between wrath and depression. There were, however, moments—those when he got hold of a new listener—in which he would light up with enthusiasm as he detailed the history of his Discovery. Then the thin, drawn cheek would fill out, and his quivering lips would become firm, and his dejected eyes would brighten with the old pride of discovery, and he would laugh once more, and rub his hands with pride, when he described the honest sympathy of the people in the Australian township, where he first announced the great Revelation he was to make to the world, and received their enthusiastic cheers and shouts of encouragement.

Harry Goslett was his last listener, and, as the enthusiast thought, his latest convert.

As Daniel passed out of the dining-room, and was looking for

his hat among a collection of hats as bad as was ever seen out of Canadian backwoods, Harry Goslett himself came downstairs, his hands in his pockets, as slowly and lazily as if there was no such thing as work to do or time to keep. He laughed and nodded to the discoverer.

‘Oho! Dan’l,’ he said; ‘how are the triangles? and are you really going back to the Lion’s Den?’

‘Yes, Mr. Goslett, I am going back there! I am not afraid of them; I am going to see the Head of the Egyptian Department. He says he will give me a hearing; they all said they would, and they have. But they won’t listen; it’s no use to hear unless you listen. What a dreadful thing is jealousy among the learned, Mr. Goslett!’

‘It is indeed, my Prophet; have they subscribed to the book?’

‘No! they won’t subscribe. Is it likely that they will help to bring out a work which proves them all wrong? Come, sir, even at your age you can’t think so well of poor humanity.’

‘Daniel—’ the young man laid his hands impressively upon the little man’s shoulders—‘you showed me yesterday a list of forty-five subscribers to your book, at twelve shillings and sixpence apiece. *Where is that subscription-money?*’

The poor man blushed, and hung his head.

‘A man must live,’ he said at length, trying to frown fiercely.

‘Yes, but unpleasant notice is sometimes taken of the way in which people live, my dear friend. This is not a free country; not by any means free. If I were you, I would take the triangles back to Australia, and print the book there, among your friends.’

‘No!’ The little man stamped on the ground, and rammed his head into his hat with determination. ‘No, Mr. Goslett, and no again. It shall be printed here. I will hurl it at the head of the so-called scholars here, in London—in their stronghold, close to the British Museum. Besides’—here he relaxed, and turned a pitiful face of sorrow and shame upon his adviser—‘besides, can I forget the day when I left Australia? They all came aboard to say good-bye. The papers had paragraphs about it. They shouted one after the other, and nobblers went around surprising, and they slapped me on the back and said, “Go, Dan’l,” or “Go, Fagg,” or “Go, Mr. Fagg,” according to their intimacy and the depth of their friendship—“Go where honour and glory and a great fortune, with a pension on the Queen’s Civil List, are waiting for you.” On the voyage I even dreamed of a title; I thought Sir Daniel Fagg, Knight or Baronet, or the Right Reverend Lord Fagg, would sound well to go back to Australia

with. Honour? Glory? Fortune? where are they? Eight-and-sixpence in my pocket; and the Head of the Greek Department calls me a fool, because I won't acknowledge that truth—yes, TRUTH—is error. Laughs at the triangles, Mr. Goslett!’

He laughed bitterly and went out, slamming the door behind him.

Then Harry entered the breakfast-room, nodding pleasantly to everybody; and without any apology for lateness, as if breakfast could be kept about all the morning to suit his convenience, sat down and began to eat. Jonathan Coppin got up, sighed and went away to his brewery. The Professor looked at the last comer with a meditative air, as if he would like to make him disappear, and could do it too, but was uncertain how Harry would take it. Mrs. Bormalack hurried away on domestic business. Mr. Maliphaunt laughed and rubbed his hands together, and then laughed again as if he were thinking of something really comic, and said, ‘Yes, I knew the Sergeant very well, a well set-up man he was, and Caroline Coppin was a pretty girl.’ At this point his face clouded and his eyes expressed doubt. ‘There was,’ he added, ‘something I wanted to ask you, young man, something’—here he tapped his forehead—‘something about your father or your mother, or both; but I have forgotten—never mind. Another time—another time.’

He ran away with boyish activity and a schoolboy's laugh, being arrived at that time of life when one becomes light of heart once more, knowing by experience that nothing matters very much. There were none left in the room but the couple who enjoyed the title.

His lordship sat in his arm-chair, apparently enjoying it, in meditation and repose; this, one perceives, is quite the best way of enjoying an hereditary title, if you come to it late in life.

His wife had, meanwhile, got out a little shabby portfolio in black leather, and was turning over the papers with impatience; now and then she looked up to see whether this late young man had finished his breakfast. She fidgeted, arranged, and worried with her papers, so that anyone, whose skull was not six inches thick, might have seen that she wanted to be alone with her husband. It was also quite clear to those who thought about things, and watched this little lady, that there may be meaning in certain proverbial expressions touching grey mares.

Presently Harry Goslett finished his coffee, and, paying no attention to her little ladyship's signals of distress, began to open up conversation on general subjects with the noble lord.

She could bear it no longer. Here were the precious moments

wasted and thrown away, every one of which should be bringing them nearer to the recognition of their rights.

'Young man,' she cried, jumping up in her chair; 'if you've got nothing to do but to loll and lop around, all forenoon, I guess we hev, and this is the room in which we do that work.'

'I beg your pardon, Lady Davenant——'

'Young man—Git——'

She pointed to the door.

## CHAPTER II.

### A VERY COMPLETE CASE.

His lordship, left alone with his wife, manifested certain signs of uneasiness. She laid the portfolio on the table, turned over the papers, sorted some of them, picked out some for reference, fetched the ink, and placed the penholder in position.

'Now, my dear,' she said, 'no time to lose. Let us set to work in earnest.'

His lordship sighed. He was sitting with his fat hands upon his knees, contented with the repose of the moment.

'Clara Martha,' he grumbled, 'cannot I have one hour of rest?'

'Not one, till you get your rights.' She hovered over him like a little falcon, fierce and persistent. 'Not one. What? You a British peer? You, who ought to be sitting with a coronet on your head—you to shrink from the trouble of writing out your Case? And such a Case!'

He only moaned. Certainly he was a very lethargic person.

'You are not the Carpenter, your father. Nor even the Wheelwright, your grandfather, who came down of his own accord. You would rise, you would soar—you have the spirit of your ancestors.'

He feebly flapped with his elbows, as if he really would like to take a turn in the air, but made no verbal response.

'Cousin Nathaniel,' she went on, 'gave us six months at six dollars a week. That's none too generous of Nathaniel, seeing we have no children, and he will be the heir to the title. I guess Aurelia Tucker set him against the thing. Six months, and three of them gone already, and nothing done. What would Aurelia say if we went home again, beaten?'

The little woman gasped, and would have shrugged her shoulders, but they were such a long way down—shoulders so sloping could not be shrugged.

Her remonstrances moved the heavy man, who drew his chair to the table with great deliberation.

'We are here,' she continued—always the exhorter and the

strengtheners of faith—‘not to claim a title but to assume it. We shall present our Case to Parliament, or the Queen, or the House of Lords, or the Court of Chancery, or whosoever is the right person, and we shall say, “I am Lord Davenant.” That is all.’

‘Clara Martha,’ said her husband, ‘I wish that were all we had to do. And, on the whole, I would as soon be back in Canaan City, New Hampshire, and the trouble over. The memoranda are all here,’ he said. ‘Can’t we get someone else to draw up the Case?’

‘Certainly not. You must do it. Why, you used to think nothing of writing out a Fourth of July speech.’

He shook his head.

‘And you know that you have often said, yourself, that there wasn’t a book written that could teach you anything up to Quadratic Equations. And self-raised; too!’

‘It isn’t that, Clara Martha. It isn’t that. Listen!’ he sank his voice to a whisper. ‘*It’s the doubt.* That’s the point. Every time I face that doubt it’s like a bucket of cold water down my back.’

She shivered. Yes: there was always the doubt.

‘Come, my dear,’ she said presently; ‘we must get the Case drawn up, so that anyone may read it. That is the first thing—never think of any doubt.’

He took up one of the loose papers, which was covered with writing.

‘Timothy Clitheroe Davenant,’ he read with a weary sigh, ‘died at Canaan City, New Hampshire, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four. By trade he was a Wheelwright. His marriage is recorded in the church register of July 1, 1773. His headstone still stands in the old churchyard, and says that he was born in England in the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-two—it does not say where he was born—and that he was sixty-two years of age at the day of his death. Also, that long time he bore——’

‘Yes, yes, but you needn’t put that in. Go on with your Case. The next point is your own father. Courage, my dear; it is a very strong Case.’

‘The Case is very strong.’ His lordship plucked up courage, and took up another paper. ‘This is my father’s record. All is clear: Born in Canaan City on October 10, 1774, the year of Independence, the eldest son of the aforesaid Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, Wheelwright, and Dinah his wife—here is a copy of the register. Married on May 13, 1810, which was late in life, because he didn’t somehow get on so fast as some, to Susanna Pegley, of the same

parish. Described as a Carpenter—but a poor workman, Clara Martha, and fond of chopping yarns, in which he was equalled by none. He died in the year 1830, his tombstone still standing, like his father's before him. It says that his end was peace. Wal—he always wanted it. Give him peace, with a chair in the verandah, and a penknife and a little bit of pine, and he asked for no more. Only that, and his wife wouldn't let him have it. His end was peace.'

'You all want peace,' said his wife. 'The Davenants always did think that they only had to sit still and the plums would drop in their mouths. As for you, I believe you'd be content to sit and sit in Canaan City till Queen Victoria found you out and sent you the coronet herself. But you've got a wife as well as your father.'

'I hev,' he said, with another sigh. 'Perhaps we were wrong to come over—I think I was happier in the schoolroom, when the boys were gone hum. It was very quiet, there, for a sleep in the afternoon by the stove. And in summer the trees looked harnsome in the sunlight.'

She shook her head impatiently.

'Come,' she cried. 'Where are the "Recollections" of your grandfather?'

He found another paper, and read it slowly,

'My grandfather died before I was born. My father, however, said that he used to throw out hints about his illustrious family, and that if he chose to go back to England some people would be very much surprised. But he never explained himself. Also he would sometimes speak of a great English estate, and once he said that the freedom of a Wheelwright was better than the gilded chains of a British aristocrat—that was at a Fourth of July Meetin'.'

'Men talk wild at meetins,' said his wife. 'Still, there may have been a meanin' behind it. Go on, Timothy—I mean, my lord.'

'As for my father, it pleased him, when he could put up his feet and crack with his friends, to brag of his great connections in England. But he never knew rightly who they were, and he was too peaceful and restful a creature to take steps to find out.'

'Waitin' for King George,' observed his wife. 'Just what you would be doin', but for me.'

'That's all the recollection. Here comes my own declaration :

"I, Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, make affidavit on oath, if necessary—but I am not quite clear as to the righteousness of swearing—that I am the son of the late Timothy Clitheroe Dave-



nant, sometime carpenter of the City of Canaan, New Hampshire, U.S.A., and Susanna his wife, both now deceased; that I was born in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, and that I have been for forty years a teacher in my native town." That is all clean and above-board, Clara Martha; no weak point so far, father to son, marriage certificates regularly found, and baptism registers. No one can ask more. "Further, I, the above-named Timothy, do claim to be the lawful and legitimate heir to the ancient barony of Davenant, supposed to be extinct in the year 1783 by the death of the last lord, without male issue." Legally worded, I think,' he added with a little proud smile.

'Yes: it reads right. Now for the connection.'

'Oh! the connection.' His lordship's face clouded over. His consort, however, awaited the explanation, for the thousandth time, in confidence. Where the masculine mind found doubt and uncertainty, the quick woman's intellect, ready to believe and tenacious of faith, had jumped to certainty.

'The connection is this.' He took up another paper, and read:

"The last Lord Davenant had one son only, a boy named Timothy Clitheroe. All the eldest sons of the House were named Timothy Clitheroe, just as all the Ashleys are named Anthony. When the boy arrived at years of maturity he was sent on the Grand Tour, which he made with a tutor. On returning to England, it is believed that he had some difference with his father, the nature of which has never been ascertained. He then embarked upon a ship sailing for the American Colonies. Nothing more was ever heard about him, no news came to his father or his friends, and he was supposed to be dead."

'Even the ship was never heard of,' added her ladyship, as if this was a fact which would greatly help in lengthening the life of the young man.

'That, too, was never heard of again. If she had not been thrown away, we might have learned what became of the Honourable Timothy Clitheroe Davenant.' There was some confusion of ideas here, which the ex-schoolmaster was not slow to perceive.

'I mean,' he tried to explain, 'that if she got safe to Boston, the young man would have landed there, and all would be comparatively clear. Whereas, if she was cast away, we must now suppose that he was saved and got ashore somehow.'

'Like Saint Paul,' she cried triumphantly, 'on a piece of wreck—what could be more simple?'

'Because,' her husband continued, 'there is one fact which proves that he *did* get ashore, that he concluded to stay there

that he descended so far into the social scale as to become a wheelwright; and that he lived and died in the town of Canaan, New Hampshire.'

'Go on, my dear. Make it clear. Put it strong. This is the most interesting point of all.'

'And this young man, who was supposed to be cast away in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four, aged twenty-two, was exactly the same age as my grandfather, Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, who *bore the same name*, which is proved by the headstone and the church books.'

'Could there,' asked his wife, springing to her feet, 'could there have been two Englishmen——?'

'Of the same illustrious and historic surname, both in America?' replied her husband, roused into a flabby enthusiasm.

'Of the same beautiful Christian name?—two Timothys?'

'Born both in the same year?'

The little woman with the bright eyes and the sloping shoulders threw her arms about her husband's neck.

'You *shall* have your rights, my dear,' she said; 'I will live to see you sitting in the House of Lords with the hereditary statesmen of England. If there is justice in the land of England, you shall have your rights. There is justice, I am sure, and equal law for poor and rich, and encouragements for the virtuous. Yes, my dear, the virtuous. Whatever your faults may be, your virtues are many, and it can't but do the House of Lords good to see a little virtue among them. Not that I hold with Aurelia Tucker that the English House of Lords are wallowers in sin; whereas, Irene Pascoe once met a Knight on a missionary platform and found he'd got religion. But virtue you can never have too much of. Courage, my lord; forget the Carpenter, and think only of the Nobleman, your grandfather, who condescended to become a Wheelwright.'

He obediently took up the pen and began. When he seemed fairly absorbed in the task of copying out and stating the case, she left him. As soon as the door was closed, he heaved a gentle sigh, pushed back his chair, put up his feet upon another chair, covered his head with his red silk pocket-handkerchief—for there were flies in the room—and dropped into a gentle slumber. The Carpenter was, for the moment, above the condescending Wheelwright.

(To be continued.)

## Stradiuarius of Cremona—his House.

FOR years I have said to myself, I will go and see this house at Cremona. The violin is the king of instruments. Stradiuarius is the king of violin-makers. In the short space of about 130 years, from 1600 to 1730, all the greatest violins in the world were made. They sold the best of them for 10 golden louis, they sell the best of them for from 300 to 1,000 guineas.

I was at Brescia. There, before 1600, worked the fathers of the violin—the men who began to get rid one after another of those lets and hindrances to tone, of those tubby shapes and faulty proportions which belong to the ancient Viol tribe. The names of Maggini and Gaspar di Salo are for ever associated with those early experiments and with Brescia. They paved the way. They struck the types, violin, viola, violoncello, and double-bass out of the host of non-descript viols, Viol da Gamba, Viole d'Amore, Violetti, &c. &c. They decided upon the survival of the fittest—on what has actually survived—they paved the way for Cremona. Yet at Brescia their houses are unknown, there are no relics of them. Their only relics are in the hands of a few amateurs and a few museums. Mr. Tyssen-Amherst has perhaps the finest known Gaspar violin; the Gaspar basses are more numerous. Dragonetti's monster Gaspar is in the South Kensington—the only instrument by any decent violin-maker that *is* in that museum. Mr. Enthoven has perhaps the finest known Maggini. And so the Brescian school, full of unique significance as it was, died and was buried, but not before it had yielded up its secrets to the Amatis and Guarnerii who settled at Cremona. In the great square of St. Domenico the Amati set up their shop; later, next door to them, worked the Guarnerii. About 1760, a young man named Antonius Stradivari, or Stradiuarius, became the devoted pupil of Nicolas, the greatest of the Amati. Andrew Guarnerius worked on the same bench with him. Anthony copied Nicolas's work as closely as he could; for more than twenty years he did little but copy. He mastered every detail; he was quite willing to be lost in the work, and, covered by the authority of the great Nicolas, he cut his scrolls, finished his backs, varnished his bellies, and often put the 'Nicolas' label into violins at least half his own.

Probably on the death of Nicolas he set up his own workshop in the same square. These three names—Amati, Guarnerii, Stradivari—there be none like them; these three shops, almost next door to

each other, opposite the big church of St. Dominic—there never were, nor will be, three such shops. In them were made, in long quiet years of peaceful, sunny labour, in steady and friendly rivalry, all the great violins in the world—the Joseph Guarnerius on which Paganini played, now in the town-hall at Genoa; the Stradiuarius on which Ernst, and now Madame Norman-Neruda, plays; Piatti's violoncello; Joachim's and Wilhelmj's 'Strads.' And the charm of these Brescian and Cremonese schools lies here, that in those days violin-making was a living, growing art, as Gothic architecture once was. Each maker was a discoverer with the enthusiasm and excitement of the unknown upon him, working out problems of tone, studying form, material; method, technique, with a view to new effects; spending a lifetime over it. With Stradiuarius the art culminated, all was done that could be done; tone, sweetness, power, sensibility, sonority, all was won; and then the decline set in, love waxed cold, and men could no more reproduce the old work than they could paint the old pictures, or carve the old statues, or build the old cathedrals.

So I said to myself at Brescia, I will go and see where the great Stradiuarius lived for ninety-three years, and loved and laboured with such absorbed and steadfast earnestness and such wondrous cunning, that for 180 years hardly a capital of the civilised world has ceased to do homage to his power, a power that is felt and loved ever more and more, and looked forward to year by year, as, with the return of Joachim, Sarasate, Norman-Neruda, Wilhelmj, the mighty soul of Stradiuarius again speaks to thousands, and with one touch of nature makes the whole world kin. Everyone, I said, will know the house of Stradiuarius at Cremona; not even the magnificent cathedral, with its almost unique façade, is so famous as the name of the great violin-maker; Cremona itself is known to the outside world by nothing else.

So I got into a cab at the station. 'Drive,' said I, 'to the *casa* of Antonius Stradivari.' 'What *casa*?' said the man; 'I do not know the name.' 'Not know the name of Stradiuarius, the great violin-maker!' 'I don't think he lives here; they don't make violins at Cremona.' 'Perhaps not,' said I, a little nettled, 'but they used to. Stradiuarius, and Joseph Guarnerius, and the Amati made them.' 'Upon my oath and the holy name of the Virgin, I assure you, sir, they never made any violins at Cremona; you are mistaken.' The driver's temper was giving way, so was mine. 'Per Baccho!' said I, as I thought under the circumstances I might swear by a heathen god; 'drive to the cathedral!' So he drove.

The splendour of those red marble lions couchant, supporting the marble columns both of the cathedral porch and of the adjacent

baptistery, the exquisite terra-cotta work and double colonnaded façade, and the great Campanile, at any other time would have tempted me to linger, but not now. I entered and cast but a languid eye upon the rich and ancient tapestries and profuse decoration in mosaic and fresco which cover every inch of the interior. The sacristan was lighting a few candles in the darkness over the high altar. I made towards him; he came down. 'Can you tell me where Stradiuarius is buried?' said I, thinking it might be better to begin at the other end this time. 'Oh, sir,' he said with a smile, 'thank the blessed saints and all the martyrs, Stradiuarius is not dead; the *avocat* is alive and in good health!' 'Ah, well,' said I, 'but where would he be buried if he were dead?' 'You mean, where is the family sepulchre? I should think it would be in the Campo Santo: it is not here. But I can show you the house of Stradivari the *avocat*, it is number three in the Corso Porta Roma,' and he politely came out of the cathedral and showed me the way. I shall now get on the scent. This advocate is no doubt a descendant; he will be able to tell me all that is known. I rang at the bell. Alas! the advocate was out of town, gone to Milan, so were all the family.

I got into another cab. 'Do you know the Piazza of Domenico?' I said, this time approaching the subject warily. 'There is no such place, sir.' This fairly staggered me. 'Well,' I said, 'I know the church has been pulled down, but can you show me where it stood?' 'Ah!' said the man, 'yes; they call it now the Piazza Roma.'

'Tis this abominable centralising spirit,' I growled to myself; 'this conceited new country, this pert Italia Una; can they not leave Tuscany alone? Piazza Roma! forsooth, what has Roma got to do with Cremona? I don't mind yonder Via Garibaldi, for he did as much for the north as for the south; and Victor Emanuel may have his statue here too, for he was a gallant Piedmontese; but why is Rome to come in and rub out the square sacred to St. Dominic, and destroy the very name dear to the memories and sacred to the sepulchres of the Amati and of Stradiuarius?'

'Drive,' I said, 'to that square,' and he drove. Then I stopped, and stood up in the carriage, and accosted my man much as follows: 'My friend, do you not know that in this ancient square of St. Dominic lived and worked those great violin-makers who have made your city famous throughout the world, and that here somewhere is still the house of the greatest of them, Stradiuarius? Can you not show me that house?' 'Sir,' said the man, not wishing to appear ignorant, 'I think that the person you mean who made violins is dead. He died some years ago; I don't know

his house, but here is a man passing.' 'Pst! stop him!' I cried; so he stopped him. 'We seek,' I said, 'the house of the great Stradiuarius.' 'Indeed,' replied this citizen of Cremona, 'I have heard of him, but I fear he is dead. He made fiddles—old fiddles. Pst!' said the man, stopping another passer-by. 'Do you know anything of one Stradiuarius, who made fiddles—old fiddles?'

I was still standing up in my carriage, and we now had quite a little crowd round us. They were all Cremonese. Some had heard of the advocate Stradivari, no one knew anything of the immortal Antonius Stradiuarius of Cremona, although scarce 150 years ago his body had been laid in the little chapel of the Rosary (since pulled down with the church), in all probability was still lying but a short stone's-throw off the little group that stood round my carriage; yet, not a soul knew his name.

At last one man stepped forward and said, 'Sir, if Stradiuarius has been dead some time, and you seek his relics, the antiquary round the corner might have heard of him.' This was all I could gather. 'A thousand thanks!' I lifted my hat, the little crowd lifted theirs. 'Drive,' I said, 'to the antiquary!' He drove; the antiquary was out, but his wife directed us to a certain house in a side street not far from the square of St. Dominic. I drew up in front of that house. Two men looked out of one window, three girls looked out of another. 'Is this,' I shouted, 'the house of Stradiuarius?' 'No, the advocate——' 'Stop,' I cried, 'do not speak of him'; I seek not the advocate—I know where he lives—I seek the house of the great Stradiuarius' (I turned to the girls), 'a maker of violins!' 'He doesn't live here, he's dead. He doesn't make violins,' they said, laughing. Then another roguish maiden, with eyes full of mischief, 'Yes, this is his house; he used to live here; he died here.' 'Then, may I come up? I want to see that room where he died.' Another young lady here put her head out: two of them were for letting me come up, and the others seemed neutral. 'Look here!' said an elderly grey-headed man at another window; 'if the gentleman wants anything, I will come down—wait. I know,' said he, 'whom you seek—do not attend to these light-headed girls—you seek the house of Stradiuarius, who made the famous violins; he died more than 100 years ago; his house is still on the Piazza, nearly opposite where the old church of St. Dominic stands. It is not here, but this is the interesting manufactory of Signor Cerito; we will show it you too, if you have time.' 'I pray you,' said I, 'as my time is short, tell me where is the *casa* of the great Stradivari.' 'Signor, it is No. 2 Piazza Roma.' 'I thank you from my heart,' I said with a sigh of infinite relief and a low bow to all the heads out of the windows.

Then to my coachman, 'Drive,' I said, 'to No. 2 Piazza Roma.' He drove.

A bright boy of the middle classes, well dressed and polite, opened the door. 'Tell me,' I said; 'I would see the rooms where Stradivari used to live.' 'Come in,' said he; 'I dare say they will let you come up; there is nothing much to see; he died here.' I entered the narrow passage; beyond it there was a little square courtyard paved with old flagstones. To the left, a narrow dark staircase led up to the second story. I could no longer doubt that I was in the house of Stradiuarius—indeed, the only traditional direction I had come to Cremona with was 'in the Square of St. Domenico, opposite the Façade,' and this house was quite near enough to correspond to that description. At the top of the first flight, a beautiful Italian girl made her appearance—the boy said she was his sister—then an elder brother, then another boy. This was all the family I saw—it was enough; they were evidently intelligent tradespeople, and knew enough for my purpose. The young man said, 'The Professor—' 'Who is the Professor?' I asked. 'The Professor Stradiuarius,' he answered, 'who made violins—but ever so long ago—inhabited these rooms, and he died here, but we cannot tell which room he died in.' 'It matters not,' said I; 'where did he work?' 'Do you really want to see where he made the violins? We never go up there—it is very dirty—but if you will see, you must ascend.' I went first, followed by the little family, who evidently thought me quite eccentric, but were extremely polite. Higher and higher; at last we came to the top of the house. 'It's higher still,' said the boy, and he pointed to a little decayed ladder which at a glance I could see was only used for certain fowls to roost on. It was very dirty: but the boy went up, and I followed; even the pretty sister gathered up her skirts daintily and joined us; the young man came last. Through a trap-door covered with cobwebs I soon emerged on to a sort of loft about twelve feet square. It was still soundly roofed with tiles and fine old beams and rafters. It was entirely exposed to light and air on the north and the west, like an open barn, but walled on the south, with two windows, and walled on the east; heavy rafters went all round, supported on solid upright beams. 'Here,' said my host, 'is where the Professor made the violins.'

I thought of the gorgeous studios in which our modern artists and sculptors think it necessary to work. I looked round, and I saw all the conditions which Stradiuarius required to produce those beautiful creations—miracles of carving, design, and subtle cabinet-work—which are still the delight of collectors who seldom hear them, of players who find in them a soul of matchless sensibility, of

makers who copy endlessly without ever being able to reproduce them, and of the whole musical world which has long hung spell-bound upon their magical vibrations.

I looked, and looked again. The genial and kindly Italian family standing there with me observed that I was absorbed and serious, and, with the kindest courtesy, kept silent. And I saw out upon the north the wide blue sky, and upon the west the wide blue sky just mellowing to a rich purple, and flaked here and there with orange streaks prophetic of sunset. Whenever Stradiuarius looked up from his work—if he looked north, his eye fell on the old towers of St. Marcellino and St. Omobono; if he looked west, the cathedral, with its tall campanile, rose dark against the sky—and what a sky!—full of clear sun in the morning, full of pure heat all day, and bathed with ineffable tints in the cool of the evening, when the light lay low upon vinery and hanging garden, or spangled with ruddy gold the eaves, the roofs, and frescoed walls of the houses.

Yes, after all, the conditions were good—good for distilling the rare gums in the natural heat; good for soaking the oil and varnish into the backs and bellies and ribs of maple and deal; good for drying leisurely day by day every polished and moulded surface and smooth strip as it hung up against the open blue sky, winnowed by the light winds as they rose and fell with spicy odours from the distant Alps.

Here, up in the high air, with the sun his helper, the light his minister, the blessed soft airs his journeymen, what time the workaday noise of the city rose, and the sound of Matins and Vespers was in his ears, through the long warm summer days worked Stradiuarius, drew in the clear light his curves of strength and beauty, cut with free hand his scrolls, rounded and chiselled with a loving eye those surfaces which resemble nothing so much as the gentle and undulating curves and satiny texture of a smooth human body. From this high laboratory, where the master seemed so far above the earth, so near to heaven, I said it was meet that such melodious and seraphic ministers should descend to be the delight and solace of our sad and discordant world. Here was shaped the 'Pucelle.' Here was conceived the graceful, sweet, and ringing 'Dolphin' Strad. Here, too, was formed and perfected that wondrous violin which, in the hands of Ernst, and never since, drew tears and laughter from enchanted multitudes, until it was difficult to believe that the spirits of the dead were not employing its pathetic vibrations to convey to mortals the expression of their infinite longings and ineffable aspirations.

I suppose my eyes were raised involuntarily as I stood facing



the north, looking over a wilderness of roofs to the great churches beyond. The young man evidently thought I was looking at the thick beam that supported the roof on that side. He climbed up so as to touch it, and felt along the inside. 'Here,' he said, 'the Professor hung up his violins. You can see how old and worn is the beam; and here and there is a crooked rusty nail on which the violins hung.' A sudden thought worthy of a Vandal seized me: 'I will possess one of those nails.' I at once invented several excuses for myself, some of them very good ones. 1st. No one else cared for the nail. 2nd. It would simply rot there and be lost. 3rd. Probably no one would ever notice it again if left. 4th. No one would miss it. 5th. Stradiurius would not want it again. 6th. I wanted it myself. This last was the best excuse I could think of, so I said to the young man, 'Whilst you are up there, do you know, I should very much value one of those old nails; could you get it for me?' 'Certainly,' said he, 'if you want it; but it is so very old and rotten, I can't draw it; it is sure to break.' 'Never mind,' said I. He did not mind. The nail did break, and I got all of it that Stradiurius ever used to hang his fiddles on.

My mission was accomplished. I looked round upon that simple, kindly, picturesque Italian family—the young man, his two young brothers, the pretty sister. 'What shall I say to thank you for your kindness to me?' 'Nothing,' said the young man, laughing; 'we don't want anything: we are glad if you are pleased; people don't often come to see the house—just one or two have been at long intervals.' 'At least,' I said, 'let me give these nice little boys something to buy toys with, for they opened the door and have been such good little guides;' and I placed a few francs in the hand of the astonished little fellows, who seemed doubtful; but the pretty sister laughed, and they took the francs with many joyful salutations.

As I went down-stairs, I met the grey-headed man who had told me of the house, coming up; he had actually, with true Italian curiosity, come all the way to see if I had really gone there. 'So, so!' he said; 'you have found the house where the Professor once lived?' 'Yes,' I said; 'I have seen the house of Stradiurius. Addio!'

H. R. HAWEIS.

## How I Married Him :

### THE CONFESSION OF A YOUNG LADY.

EDITED BY WILKIE COLLINS.

#### CHAPTER I.

WHEN I first saw him, he was lost in one of the Dead Cities of England—situated on the south coast, and called Sandwich.

Shall I describe Sandwich? I think not. Let us own the truth; descriptions of places, however nicely they may be written, are always more or less dull. Being a woman, I naturally hate dulness. Perhaps some description of Sandwich may drop out, as it were, from my report of our conversation when we first met as strangers in the street.

He began irritably. 'I've lost myself,' he said.

'Most strangers to the town do that,' I remarked.

He went on: 'Which is my way to the Fleur de Lys Inn?'

His way was, in the first place, to retrace his steps. Then to turn to the left. Then to go on until he found two streets meeting. Then to take the street on the right. Then to look out for the second turning on the left. Then to follow the turning until he smelt stables—and there was the inn. I put it in the clearest manner, and never stumbled over a word.

'How the devil am I to remember all that?' he said.

This was rude. We are, naturally and properly, indignant with any man who is rude to us. But whether we turn our backs on him in contempt, or whether we are merciful and give him a lesson in politeness, depends entirely on the man. He may be a bear, but he may also have his redeeming qualities. This man had redeeming qualities. I cannot positively say that he was either handsome or ugly, young or old, well or ill dressed. But I can speak with certainty to the personal attractions which recommended him to notice. For instance, the tone of his voice was rich and persuasive. (Did you ever read a story, written by one of *us*, in which we failed to dwell on our hero's voice?) Then, again, his hair was reasonably long. (Are you acquainted with any woman who can endure a man with a cropped head?) Moreover, he was of a good height. (It must be a very tall woman who can feel favourably inclined towards a short man.) Lastly, although his

eyes were not more than fairly presentable in form and colour, the wretch had in some unaccountable manner become possessed of beautiful eyelashes. They were even better eyelashes than mine. I write quite seriously. There is one woman who is above the common weakness of vanity—and she holds the present pen.

So I gave my lost stranger a lesson in politeness. The lesson took the form of a trap. I asked if he would like me to show him the way to the inn. He was still annoyed at losing himself. As I had anticipated, he bluntly answered, 'Yes.'

'When you were a boy, and you wanted something,' I said, 'did your mother teach you to say "Please"?''

He positively blushed. 'She did,' he admitted; 'and she taught me to say, "Beg your pardon" when I was rude. I'll say it now: "Beg your pardon."'

This curious apology increased my belief in his redeeming qualities. I led the way to the inn. He followed me in silence. No woman who respects herself can endure silence when she is in the company of a man. I made him talk.

'Do you come to us from Ramsgate?' I began. He only nodded his head. 'We don't think much of Ramsgate here,' I went on. 'Not even two hundred years old! and hasn't got a mayor and corporation!'

This point of view seemed to be new to him. He made no attempt to dispute it; he only looked round him, and said, 'Sandwich is a melancholy place, Miss.' He was so rapidly improving in politeness, that I encouraged him by a smile. As a citizen of Sandwich, I may say that we take it as a compliment when we are told that our town is a melancholy place. And why not? Melancholy is connected with dignity. And dignity is associated with age. And *we* are old. I teach my pupils logic, among other things—there is a specimen. Whatever may be said to the contrary, women can reason. They can also wander; and I must admit that *I* am wandering. Did I mention, at starting, that I was a governess? If not, that allusion to 'pupils' must have come in rather abruptly. Let me make my excuses, and return to my lost stranger.

'Is there any such thing as a straight street in all Sandwich?' he asked.

'Not one straight street in the whole town.'

'Any trade, Miss?'

'As little as possible—and *that* is expiring.'

'A decayed place, in short?'

'Thoroughly decayed.'

My tone seemed to astonish him. 'You speak as if you were proud of its being a decayed place,' he said.

I quite respected him ; this was such an intelligent remark to make. We do enjoy our decay : it is our chief distinction. Progress and prosperity everywhere else ; decay and dissolution here. As a necessary consequence, we produce our own impression, and we like to be original. The sea deserted us long ago : it once washed our walls, it is now two miles away from us—we don't regret the sea. We had sometimes ninety-five ships in our harbour, Heaven only knows how many centuries ago ; we now have one or two small coasting vessels, half their time aground in a muddy little river—we don't regret our harbour. But one house in the town is daring enough to anticipate the arrival of resident visitors, and announces furnished apartments to let. What a becoming contrast to our modern neighbour, Ramsgate ! Our noble market-place exhibits the laws made by the corporation ; and every week there are fewer and fewer people to obey the laws. How convenient ! Look at our one warehouse by the river side—with the crane generally idle, and the windows mostly boarded up ; and perhaps one man at the door, looking out for the job which his better sense tells him cannot possibly come. What a wholesome protest against the devastating hurry and over-work elsewhere, which has shattered the nerves of the nation ! 'Far from me and from my friends' (to borrow the eloquent language of Doctor Johnson) 'be such frigid enthusiasm as shall conduct us indifferent and unmoved' over the bridge by which you enter Sandwich, and pay a toll if you do it in a carriage. 'That man is little to be envied' (Doctor Johnson again) who can lose himself in our labyrinthine streets, and not feel that he has reached the welcome limits of progress, and found a haven of rest in an age of hurry.

I am wandering again. Bear with the unpremeditated enthusiasm of a citizen who only attained years of discretion at her last birthday. We shall soon have done with Sandwich ; we are close to the door of the inn.

'You can't mistake it now, sir,' I said. 'Good morning.'

He looked down at me from under his beautiful eyelashes (have I mentioned that I am a little woman ?), and he asked in his persuasive tones, 'Must we say good-bye ?'

I made him a bow.

'Would you allow me to see you safe home ?' he suggested.

Any other man would have offended me. This man blushed like a boy, and looked at the pavement instead of looking at me. By this time I had made up my mind about him. He was not

only a gentleman beyond all doubt, but a shy gentleman as well. His bluntness and his odd remarks were, as I thought, partly efforts to disguise his shyness, and partly refuges in which he tried to forget his own sense of it. I answered his audacious proposal amiably and pleasantly. 'You would only lose your way again,' I said, 'and I should have to take you back to the inn for the second time.'

He turned round in a bewildered way towards the inn.

'I have ordered lunch here,' he said, 'and I am quite alone.' He turned my way again, and looked as if he rather expected me to box his ears. 'I shall be forty next birthday,' he went on; 'I am old enough to be your father.' I all but burst out laughing, and stepped across the street, on my way home. He followed me. 'We might invite the landlady to join us,' he said, looking the picture of a headlong man, dismayed by the consciousness of his own imprudence. 'Couldn't you honour me by lunching with me if we had the landlady?' he asked.

This was a little too much. 'Quite out of the question, sir—and you ought to know it,' I said with severity. He half put out his hand. 'Won't you even shake hands with me?' he inquired piteously. When we have most properly administered a reproof to a man, what *is* the perversity which makes us weakly pity him the minute afterwards? I was fool enough to shake hands with this perfect stranger. And, having done it, I completed the total loss of my dignity by running away. Our dear crooked little streets hid me from him directly.

As I rang at the door-bell of my employer's house, a thought occurred to me which might have been alarming to a better regulated mind than mine.

'Suppose he should come back to Sandwich?'

## CHAPTER II.

BEFORE many more days passed I had troubles of my own to contend with, which put the eccentric stranger out of my head for the time.

Unfortunately, my troubles are part of my story; and my early life mixes itself up with them. In consideration of what is to follow, may I say two words relating to the period before I was a governess?

I am the orphan daughter of a shopkeeper of Sandwich. My father died, leaving to his widow and child an honest name and a little income of 80*l.* a year. We kept on the shop—neither gaining nor losing by it. The truth is, nobody would buy our

poor little business. I was thirteen years old at the time ; and I was able to help my mother, whose health was then beginning to fail. Never shall I forget a certain bright summer's day, when I saw a new customer enter our shop. He was an elderly gentleman ; and he seemed surprised to find so young a girl as myself in charge of the business, and, what is more, competent to support the charge. I answered his questions in a manner which seemed to please him. He soon discovered that my education (excepting my knowledge of the business) had been sadly neglected ; and he inquired if he could see my mother. She was resting on the sofa in the back parlour—and she received him there. When he came out, he patted me on the cheek. 'I have taken a fancy to you,' he said, 'and perhaps I shall come back again.' He did come back again. My mother had referred him to the rector for our characters in the town, and he had heard what our clergyman could say for us. Our only relations had emigrated to Australia, and were not doing well there. My mother's death would leave me, so far as relatives were concerned, literally alone in the world. 'Give this girl a first-rate education,' said our elderly customer, sitting at our tea-table in the back parlour, 'and she will do. If you will send her to school, ma'am, I'll pay for her education.' My poor mother began to cry at the prospect of parting with me. The old gentleman said, 'Think of it,' and got up to go. He gave me his card as I opened the shop door for him. 'If you find yourself in trouble,' he whispered, so that my mother could not hear him, 'be a wise child, and write and tell me of it.' I looked at the card. Our kind-hearted customer was no less a person than Sir Gerard Royland, of Garrum Park, Sussex—with landed property in our county as well ! He had made himself (through the rector, no doubt) far better acquainted than I was with the true state of my mother's health. In four months from the memorable day when the great man had taken tea with us, my time had come to be alone in the world. I have no courage to dwell on it ; my spirits sink, even at this distance of time, when I think of myself in those days. The good rector helped me with his advice—I wrote to Sir Gerard Royland.

A change had come over his life as well as mine in the interval since we had met.

Sir Gerard had married for the second time—and, what was more foolish still, perhaps, at his age, had married a young woman. She was said to be consumptive, and of a jealous temper as well. Sir Gerard's only child by his first wife, a son and heir, was so angry at his father's second marriage, that he left the house. The landed property being entailed, Sir Gerard could only express his sense

of his son's conduct by making a new will, which left all his property in money to his young wife.

These particulars I gathered from the steward, who was expressly sent to visit me at Sandwich.

'Sir Gerard never makes a promise without keeping it,' this gentleman informed me. 'I am directed to take you to a first-rate ladies' school in the neighbourhood of London, and to make all the necessary arrangements for your remaining there until you are eighteen years of age. Any written communications in the future are to pass, if you please, through the hands of the rector of Sandwich. The delicate health of the new Lady Royland makes it only too likely that the lives of her husband and herself will be passed, for the most part, in a milder climate than the climate of England. I am instructed to say this, and to convey to you Sir Gerard's best wishes.'

By the rector's advice, I accepted the position offered to me in this unpleasantly formal manner—concluding (quite correctly, as I afterwards discovered) that I was indebted to Lady Royland for the arrangement which personally separated me from my benefactor. Her husband's kindness and my gratitude, meeting on the neutral ground of Garrum Park, were objects of conjugal distrust to this lady. Shocking! shocking! I left a sincerely grateful letter to be forwarded to Sir Gerard; and, escorted by the steward, I went to school—being then just fourteen years old.

I know I am a fool. Never mind. There is some pride in me, though I am only a small shopkeeper's daughter. My new life had its trials—my pride held me up.

For the four years during which I remained at the school, my poor welfare might be a subject of inquiry to the rector, and sometimes even to the steward—never to Sir Gerard himself. His winters were no doubt passed abroad; but in the summer-time he and Lady Royland were at home again. Not even for a day or two in the holiday time was there pity enough felt for my lonely position to ask me to be the guest of the housekeeper (I expected nothing more) at Garrum Park. But for my pride, I might have felt it bitterly. My pride said to me, 'Do justice to yourself.' I worked so hard, I behaved so well, that the mistress of the school wrote to Sir Gerard to tell him how thoroughly I had deserved the kindness that he had shown to me. No answer was received. (Oh, Lady Royland!) No change varied the monotony of my life—except when one of my schoolgirl friends sometimes took me home with her for a few days at vacation time. Never mind. My pride held me up.

As the last half-year of my time at school approached, I began to consider the serious question of my future life.

Of course, I could have lived on my eighty pounds a year ; but what a lonely, barren existence it promised to be!—unless somebody married me ; and where, if you please, was I to find him ? My education had thoroughly fitted me to be a governess. Why not try my fortune, and see a little of the world in that way ? Even if I fell among ill-conditioned people, I could be independent of them, and retire on my income.

The rector, visiting London, came to see me. He not only approved of my idea—he offered me a means of carrying it out. A worthy family, recently settled at Sandwich, were in want of a governess. The head of the household was partner in a business (the exact nature of which it is needless to mention) having ‘branches’ out of London. He had become superintendent of a new ‘branch’—tried as a promising commercial experiment, under special circumstances, at Sandwich. The idea of returning to my native place pleased me—dull as the place was to others. I accepted the situation.

When the steward’s usual half-yearly letter arrived soon afterwards, inquiring what plans I had formed on leaving school, and what he could do to help them, acting on behalf of Sir Gerard, a delicious tingling filled me from head to foot when I thought of my own independence. It was not ingratitude towards my benefactor ; it was only my little private triumph over Lady Royland. Oh, my sisters of the sex, can you not understand and forgive me ?

So to Sandwich I returned ; and there, for three years, I remained with the kindest people who ever breathed the breath of life. Under their roof I was still living when I met with my lost gentleman in the street.

Ah me ! the end of that quiet, pleasant life was near. When I lightly spoke to the odd stranger of the expiring trade of the town, I never suspected that my employer’s trade was expiring too. The speculation had turned out to be a losing one ; and all his savings had been embarked in it. He could no longer remain at Sandwich, or afford to keep a governess. His wife broke the sad news to me. I was so fond of the children, I proposed to her to give up my salary. Her husband refused even to consider the proposal. It was the old story of poor humanity over again. We cried, we kissed, we parted.

What was I to do next ?—write to Sir Gerard ?

I had already written, soon after my return to Sandwich ; breaking through the regulations by directly addressing Sir Gerard. gld



expressed my grateful sense of his generosity to a poor girl who had no family claim on him; and I promised to make the one return in my power by trying to be worthy of the interest that he had taken in me. The letter was written without any alloy of mental reserve. My new life as a governess was such a happy one, that I had forgotten my paltry bitterness of feeling against Lady Royland.

It was a relief to think of this change for the better, when the secretary at Garrum Park informed me that he had forwarded my letter to Sir Gerard, then at Madeira with his sick wife. She was slowly and steadily wasting away in a decline. Before another year had passed, Sir Gerard was left a widower for the second time, with no child to console him under his loss. No answer came to my grateful letter. I should have been unreasonable indeed if I had expected the bereaved husband to remember me in his grief and loneliness. Could I write to him again, in my own trumpery little interests, under these circumstances? I thought (and still think) that the commonest feeling of delicacy forbade it. The only other alternative was to appeal to the ever-ready friends of the obscure and helpless public. I advertised in the newspapers.

The tone of one of the answers which I received impressed me so favourably, that I forwarded my references. The next post brought my written engagement, and the offer of a salary which doubled my income.

The story of the past is told; and now we travel on again, with no more stoppages by the way.

### CHAPTER III.

THE residence of my present employer was in the north of England. Having to pass through London, I arranged to stay in town for a few days to make some necessary additions to my wardrobe. An old servant of the rector, who kept a lodging-house in the suburbs, received me kindly, and guided my choice in the serious matter of a dressmaker. On the second morning after my arrival, an event happened. The post brought me a letter forwarded from the rectory. Imagine my astonishment when my correspondent proved to be Sir Gerard Royland himself!

The letter was dated from his house in London. It briefly invited me to call and see him, for a reason which I should hear from his own lips. He naturally supposed that I was still at Sandwich, and requested me, in a postscript, to consider my journey as made at his expense.

I went to the house the same day. While I was asking for

Sir Gerard and giving my name, a gentleman came out into the hall. He spoke to me without ceremony. 'Sir Gerard,' he said, 'believes he is going to die. Don't encourage him in that idea. He may live for another year or more, if his friends will only persuade him to be hopeful about himself.' With that the gentleman left me; the servant said it was the doctor.

The change in my benefactor, since I had seen him last, startled and distressed me. He lay back in a large arm-chair, wearing a grim black dressing-gown, and looking pitiaibly thin and pinched and worn. I do not think I should have known him again, if we had met by accident. He signed to me to be seated on a little chair by his side.

'I wanted to see you,' he said quietly, 'before I die. You must have thought me neglectful and unkind, with good reason. My child, you have not been forgotten. If years have passed without a meeting between us, it has not been altogether my fault——'

He stopped. A pained expression passed over his poor worn face; he was evidently thinking of the young wife whom he had lost. I repeated—fervently and sincerely repeated—what I had already said to him in writing. 'I owe everything, sir, to your fatherly kindness.' Saying this, I ventured a little further. I took his wan white hand, hanging over the arm of the chair, and respectfully put it to my lips.

He gently drew his hand away from me, and sighed as he did it. Perhaps *she* had sometimes kissed his hand. 'Now tell me about yourself,' he said.

I told him of my new situation, and how I had got it. He listened with evident interest. 'I was not self-deceived,' he said, 'when I first took a fancy to you in the shop. I admire your independent feeling; it's the right kind of courage in a girl like you. But you must let me do something more for you—some little service, to remember me by when the end has come. What shall it be?'

'Try to get better, sir; and let me write to you now and then,' I answered. 'Indeed, indeed, I want nothing more.'

'You will accept a little present, at least?' With those words he took from the breast pocket of his dressing-gown an enamelled cross attached to a gold chain. 'Think of me sometimes,' he said, as he put the chain round my neck. He drew me to him gently, and kissed my forehead. It was too much for me. 'Don't cry, my dear,' he said; 'don't remind me of another sad young face——' Once more he stopped; once more he was thinking of the lost wife. I pulled down my veil, and ran out of the room.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE next day I was on my way to the north. My narrative brightens again—but let us not forget Sir Gerard Royland.

I ask permission to introduce some persons of distinction:—Mrs. Fosdyke, of Carsham Hall, widow of General Fosdyke; also Master Frederick, Miss Ellen; and Miss Eva, the pupils of the new governess; also two ladies and three gentlemen, guests staying in the house.

Discreet and dignified; handsome and well-bred—such was my impression of Mrs. Fosdyke, while she harangued me on the subject of her children, and communicated her views on education. Having heard the views before from others, I assumed a listening position, and privately formed my opinion of the schoolroom. It was large, lofty, perfectly furnished for the purpose; it had a big window and a balcony looking out over the garden terrace and the park beyond—a wonderful schoolroom, in my limited experience. One of the two doors which it possessed was left open, and showed me a sweet little bedroom, with amber draperies and maplewood furniture, devoted to myself. Here were wealth and liberality, in that harmonious combination so seldom discovered by the spectator of small means. I controlled my first feeling of bewilderment just in time to answer Mrs. Fosdyke on the subject of reading and recitation—viewed as minor accomplishments which a good governess might be expected to teach.

‘While the organs are young and pliable,’ the lady remarked, ‘I regard it as of great importance to practise children in the art of reading aloud, with an agreeable variety of tone and correctness of emphasis. Trained in this way, they will produce a favourable impression on others, even in ordinary conversation, when they grow up. Poetry, committed to memory and recited, is a valuable means towards this end. May I hope that your studies have enabled you to carry out my views?’

Formal enough in language, but courteous and kind in manner. I relieved Mrs. Fosdyke from anxiety by informing her that we had a professor of elocution at school. And then I was left to improve my acquaintance with my three pupils.

They were fairly intelligent children; the boy, as usual, being slower than the girls. I did my best—with many a sad remembrance of the far dearer pupils whom I had left—to make them like me and trust me; and I succeeded in winning their confidence. In a week from the time of my arrival at Carsham Hall, we began to understand each other.

The first day in the week was one of our days for reciting poetry, in obedience to the instructions with which I had been favoured by Mrs. Fosdyke. I had done with the girls, and had just opened (perhaps I ought to say profaned) Shakespeare's 'Julius Cæsar,' in the elocutionary interests of Master Freddy. Half of Mark Antony's first glorious speech over Cæsar's dead body he had learnt by heart; and it was now my duty to teach him, to the best of my small ability, how to speak it. The morning was warm. We had our big window open; the delicious perfume of flowers in the garden beneath filled the room.

I recited the first eight lines, and stopped there, feeling that I must not exact too much from the boy at first. 'Now, Freddy,' I said, 'try if you can speak the poetry as I have spoken it.'

'Don't do anything of the kind, Freddy,' said a voice from the garden; 'it's all spoken wrong.'

Who was this insolent person? Strange to say, there was something not entirely unfamiliar to me in the voice. The girls began to giggle. Their brother was more explicit. 'Oh,' says Freddy, 'it's only Mr. Sax.'

The one becoming course to pursue was to take no notice of the interruption. 'Go on,' I said. Freddy recited the lines, like a dear good boy, with as near an imitation of my style of elocution as could be expected from him.

'Poor devil!' cried the voice from the garden, insolently pitying my attentive pupil.

I imposed silence on the girls by a look—and then, without stirring from my chair, expressed my sense of the insolence of Mr. Sax in clear and commanding tones. 'I shall be obliged to close the window if this is repeated.' Having spoken to that effect, I waited in expectation of an apology. Silence was the only apology. It was enough for me that I had produced the right impression. I went on with my recitation.

'Here, under leave of Brutus, and the rest  
(For Brutus is an honourable man;  
So are they all, all honourable men),  
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me—'

'Oh, good heavens, I can't stand *that*! Confound you! why don't you speak that last line properly? Listen to me.'

Dignity is a valuable quality, especially in a governess. But there are limits to the most highly trained endurance. I bounced out into the balcony—and there, on the terrace, smoking a cigar, was my lost stranger in the streets of Sandwich!

He recognised me, on his side, the instant I appeared. 'Oh, Lord!' he cried in tones of horror, and ran round the corner of the terrace as if my eyes had been mad bulls in close pursuit of him. By this time it is, I fear, useless for me to set myself up as a discreet person in emergencies. Another woman might have controlled herself. I burst into fits of laughter. Freddy and the girls joined me. For the time, it was plainly useless to pursue the business of education. I shut up Shakespeare, and allowed—no, let me tell the truth, encouraged—the children to talk about Mr. Sax.

They only seemed to know what Mr. Sax himself had told them. His father and mother and brothers and sisters had all died in course of time. He was the sixth and last of the children, and he had been christened 'Sextus' in consequence, which is Latin (here Freddy interposed) for sixth. Also christened 'Cyril' (here the girls recovered the lead) by his mother's request; 'Sextus' being such a hideous name. And which of his Christian names, my dears, does he use? You wouldn't ask if you knew him! 'Sextus,' of course, because it is the ugliest. Sextus Sax? Not the romantic sort of name that one likes, when one is a woman. But I have no right to be particular. My own name (is it possible that I have not mentioned it in these pages yet?) is a homely one—I am only Susan Morris. Do not despise me—and let us return to Mr. Sax. Is he married? The eldest girl thought not. She had heard mamma say to a lady, 'An old German family, my dear, and, in spite of his oddities, an excellent man; but so poor—barely enough to live on—and blurts out the truth, if people ask his opinion, as if he had twenty thousand a year!' Your mamma knows him well, of course? I should think so, and so do we. He often comes here. They say he's not good company among grown-up people. *We* think him jolly. He understands dolls, and he's the best back at leap-frog in the whole of England.'

Thus far we had advanced in the praise of Sextus Sax, when one of the maids came in with a note for me. She smiled mysteriously, and said, 'I'm to wait for an answer, Miss.'

I opened the note, and read these lines:—

'I am so ashamed of myself, I daren't attempt to make my apologies personally. Will you accept my written excuses? Upon my honour, nobody told me when I got here yesterday that you were in the house. I heard the recitation, and—can you excuse my stupidity?—I thought it was a stage-struck housemaid amusing herself with the children. May I accompany you when you go out with the young ones for your daily walk? One word will do. Yes or no. Penitently yours,—S. S.'

In my position, there was but one possible answer to this. Governesses must not make appointments with strange gentlemen—even when the children are present in the capacity of witnesses. I said, No. Am I claiming too much for my readiness to forgive injuries, when I add that I should have preferred saying Yes?

We had our early dinner, and then got ready to go out walking as usual. These pages contain a true confession. Let me own that I hoped Mr. Sax would understand my refusal, and ask Mrs. Fosdyke's leave to accompany us. Lingered a little as we went downstairs, I heard him in the hall—actually speaking to Mrs. Fosdyke! What was he saying? That darling boy, Freddy, got into a difficulty with one of his boot-laces exactly at the right moment. I could help him, and listen—and be sadly disappointed by the result. Mr. Sax was offended with me.

'You needn't introduce me to the new governess,' I heard him say. 'We have met on a former occasion, and I produced a disagreeable impression on her. I beg you will not speak of me to Miss Morris.'

Before Mrs. Fosdyke could say a word in reply, Master Freddy changed suddenly from a darling boy to a detestable imp. 'I say, Mr. Sax!' he called out, 'Miss Morris doesn't mind you a bit—she only laughs at you.'

The answer to this was the sudden closing of a door. Mr. Sax had taken refuge from me in one of the ground-floor rooms. I was so mortified, I could almost have cried.

Getting down into the hall, we found Mrs. Fosdyke with her garden hat on, and one of the two ladies who were staying in the house (the unmarried one) whispering to her at the door of the morning-room. The lady—Miss Melbury—looked at me with a certain appearance of curiosity which I was quite at a loss to understand, and suddenly turned away towards the farther end of the hall.

'I will walk with you and the children,' Mrs. Fosdyke said to me. 'Freddy, you can ride your bicycle if you like.' She turned to the girls. 'My dears, it's cool under the trees. You may take your skipping-ropes.'

She had evidently something special to say to me; and she had adopted the necessary measures for keeping the children in front of us, well out of hearing. Freddy led the way on his horse on three wheels; the girls followed, skipping merrily. Mrs. Fosdyke opened her business by the most embarrassing remark that she could possibly have made under the circumstances.

'I find that you are acquainted with Mr. Sax,' she began; 'and I am surprised to hear that you dislike him.'

She smiled pleasantly, as if my supposed dislike of Mr. Sax rather amused her. What 'the ruling passion' may be among men, I cannot presume to consider. My own sex, however, I may claim to understand. The ruling passion among women is Conceit. My ridiculous notion of my own consequence was wounded in some way. I assumed a position of the loftiest indifference.

'Really, ma'am,' I said, 'I can't undertake to answer for any impression that Mr. Sax may have formed. We met by the merest accident. I know nothing about him.'

Mrs. Fosdyke eyed me slyly, and appeared to be more amused than ever.

'He is a very odd man,' she admitted, 'but I can tell you there is a fine nature under that strange surface of his. However,' she went on, 'I am forgetting that he forbids me to talk about him in your presence. When the opportunity offers, I shall take my own way of teaching you two to understand each other: you will both be grateful to me when I have succeeded. In the meantime, there is a third person who will be sadly disappointed to hear that you know nothing about Mr. Sax.'

'May I ask, ma'am, who the person is?'

'Can you keep a secret, Miss Morris? Of course you can! The person is Miss Melbury.'

(Miss Melbury was a dark woman. It cannot be because I am a fair woman myself—I hope I am above such narrow prejudice as that—but it is certainly true that I don't admire dark women.)

'She heard Mr. Sax telling me that you particularly disliked him,' Mrs. Fosdyke proceeded. 'And just as you appeared in the hall, she was asking me to find out what your reason was.'

Thus far we had been walking on. We now stopped, as if by common consent, and looked at one another.

In my brief experience of Mrs. Fosdyke, I had thus far only seen the more constrained and formal side of her character. Without being aware of my own success, I had won the mother's heart in winning the good-will of her children. Constraint now seized its first opportunity of melting away; the latent sense of humour in the great lady showed itself, while I was inwardly wondering what the nature of Miss Melbury's interest in Mr. Sax might be. Easily penetrating my thoughts, she satisfied my curiosity without committing herself to a reply in words. Her large grey eyes sparkled as they rested on my face, and she hummed the tune of the old French song, '*C'est l'amour, l'amour,*

*l'amour.* There is no disguising it—something in this disclosure made me excessively angry. Was I angry with Miss Melbury? or with Mr. Sax? or with myself? I think it must have been with myself.

Finding that I had nothing to say on my side, Mrs. Fosdyke looked at her watch, and remembered her domestic duties. To my relief, our interview came to an end.

‘I have a dinner-party to-day,’ she said, ‘and I have not seen the housekeeper yet. Make yourself beautiful, Miss Morris, and join us in the drawing-room after dinner.’

#### CHAPTER V.

I WORE my best dress; and, in all my life before, I never took such pains with my hair. Nobody will be foolish enough, I hope, to suppose that I did this on Mr. Sax’s account. How could I possibly care about a man who was little better than a stranger to me? No! the person I dressed at was Miss Melbury.

She gave me a look, as I modestly placed myself in a corner, which amply rewarded me for the time spent on my toilette. The gentlemen came in. I looked at Mr. Sax (mere curiosity) under shelter of my fan. His appearance was greatly improved by evening dress. He discovered me in my corner, and seemed doubtful whether to approach me or not. I was reminded of our first odd meeting; and I could not help smiling as I called it to mind. Did he presume to think that I was encouraging him? Before I could decide that question, he took the vacant place on the sofa. In any other man—after what had passed in the morning—this would have been an audacious proceeding. *He* looked so painfully embarrassed, that it became a species of Christian duty to pity him.

‘Won’t you shake hands?’ he said, just as he had said it at Sandwich.

I peeped round the corner of my fan at Miss Melbury. She was looking at us. I shook hands with Mr. Sax.

‘What sort of sensation is it,’ he asked, ‘when you shake hands with a man whom you hate?’

‘I really can’t tell you,’ I answered innocently; ‘I have never done such a thing.’

‘You wouldn’t lunch with me at Sandwich,’ he protested; ‘and, after the humblest apology on my part, you won’t forgive me for what I did this morning. Do you expect me to believe that I am not the special object of your antipathy? I wish I had never met with you! At my age, a man gets angry when he is



treated cruelly and doesn't deserve it. You don't understand that, I dare say.'

'Oh yes, I do. I heard what you said about me to Mrs. Fosdyke, and I heard you bang the door when you got out of my way.'

He received this reply with every appearance of satisfaction. 'So you listened, did you? I'm glad to hear that.'

'Why?'

'It shows you take some interest in me, after all.'

Throughout this frivolous talk (I only venture to report it because it shows that I bore no malice on my side) Miss Melbury was looking at us like the basilisk of the ancients. She owned to being on the wrong side of thirty; and she had a little money—but these were surely no reasons why she should glare at a poor governess. Had some secret understanding of the tender sort been already established between Mr. Sax and herself? She provoked me into trying to find out—especially as the last words he had said offered me the opportunity.

'I can prove that I feel a sincere interest in you,' I resumed. 'I can resign you to a lady who has a far better claim to your attention than mine. You are neglecting her shamefully.'

He stared at me with an appearance of bewilderment, which seemed to imply that the attachment was on the lady's side, so far. It was of course impossible to mention names; I merely turned my eyes in the right direction. He looked where I looked—and his shyness revealed itself, in spite of his resolution to conceal it. His face flushed; he looked mortified and surprised. Miss Melbury could endure it no longer. She rose, took a song from the music-stand, and approached us.

'I am going to sing,' she said, handing the music to him. 'Please turn over for me, Mr. Sax.'

I think he hesitated—but I cannot feel sure that I observed him correctly. It matters little. With or without hesitation, he followed her to the piano.

Miss Melbury sang—with perfect self-possession, and an immense compass of voice. A gentleman near me said she ought to be on the stage. I thought so too. Big as it was, our drawing-room was not large enough for her. The gentleman sang next. No voice at all—but so sweet, such true feeling! I turned over the leaves for him. A dear old lady, sitting near the piano, entered into conversation with me. She spoke of the great singers at the beginning of the present century. Mr. Sax hovered about, with Miss Melbury's eye on him. I was so entranced by the anecdotes of my venerable friend, that I could take

no notice of Mr. Sax. Later, when the dinner-party was over, and we were retiring for the night, he still hovered about, and ended in offering me a bedroom candle. I immediately handed it to Miss Melbury. Really a most enjoyable evening!

## CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning, we were startled by an extraordinary proceeding on the part of one of the guests. Mr. Sax had left Carsham Hall, by the first train—nobody knew why.

Nature has laid—so, at least, philosophers say—some heavy burdens upon women. Do those learned persons include in their list the burden of hysterics? If so, I cordially agree with them. It is hardly worth speaking of in my case—a constitutional outbreak in the solitude of my own room, treated with eau-de-cologne and water, and quite forgotten afterwards in the absorbing employment of education. My favourite pupil, Freddy, had been up earlier than the rest of us—breathing the morning air in the fruit-garden. He had seen Mr. Sax, and had asked when he was coming back again. And Mr. Sax had said, ‘I shall be back again next month.’ (Dear little Freddy!)

In the mean while, we, in the schoolroom, had the prospect before us of a dull time in an empty house. The remaining guests were to go away at the end of the week, their hostess being engaged to pay a visit to some old friends in Scotland.

During the next three or four days, though I was often alone with Mrs. Fosdyke, she never said one word on the subject of Mr. Sax. Once or twice I caught her looking at me with that unendurably significant smile of hers. Miss Melbury was equally unpleasant in another way. When we accidentally met on the stairs, her black eyes shot at me passing glances of hatred and scorn. Did these two ladies presume to think——?

No; I abstained from completing that inquiry at the time, and I abstain from completing it here.

The end of the week came, and I and the children were left alone at Carsham Hall.

I took advantage of the leisure hours at my disposal to write to Sir Gerard; respectfully inquiring after his health, and informing him that I had been again most fortunate in my engagement as a governess. By return post an answer arrived. I eagerly opened it. The first lines informed me of Sir Gerard Royland’s death.

The letter dropped from my hand. I looked at my little enamelled cross. It is not for me to say what I felt. Think of all

that I owed to him ; and remember how lonely my lot was in the world. I gave the children a holiday ; it was only the truth to tell them that I was not well.

How long an interval passed before I could call to mind that I had only read the first lines of the letter, I am not able to say. When I did take it up, I was surprised to see that the writing covered two pages. Beginning again where I had left off, my head, in a moment more, began to swim. A horrid fear overpowered me that I might not be in my right mind, after I had read the first three sentences. Here they are, to answer for me that I exaggerate nothing :—

‘The will of our deceased client is not yet proved. But, with the sanction of the executors, I inform you confidentially that you are the person chiefly interested in it. Sir Gerard Royland bequeaths to you, absolutely, the whole of his personal property, amounting to the sum of seventy thousand pounds.’

If the letter had ended there, I really cannot imagine what extravagances I might not have committed. But the writer (head partner in the firm of Sir Gerard’s lawyers) had something more to say on his own behalf. The manner in which he said it strung up my nerves in an instant. I cannot, and will not, copy the words here. It is quite revolting enough to give the substance of them.

The man’s object was evidently to let me perceive that he disapproved of the will. So far, I do not complain of him—he had no doubt good reason for the view he took. But, in expressing his surprise ‘at this extraordinary proof of the testator’s interest in a perfect stranger to the family,’ he hinted his suspicion of an influence, on my part, exercised over Sir Gerard, so utterly shameful, that I cannot dwell on the subject. The language, I should add, was cunningly guarded. Even I could see that it would bear more than one interpretation, and would thus put me in the wrong if I openly resented it. But the meaning was plain ; and part at least of the motive came out in the concluding sentences.

‘Sir Gerard’s son, as you are doubtless aware, is not seriously affected by the will. He is already far more liberally provided for, as heir under the entail to the whole of the landed property. But, to say nothing of old friends who are forgotten, there is a surviving relative of Sir Gerard passed over, who is nearly akin to him by blood. In the event of this person disputing the will, you will of course hear from us again, and refer us to your legal adviser.’

The letter ended with an apology for delay in writing to me, caused by difficulty in discovering my address.

And what did I do?—Write to the rector or to Mrs. Fosdyke for advice? Not I!

At first I was too indignant to be able to think of what I ought to do. Our post-time was late, and my head ached as if it would burst into pieces. I had plenty of leisure to rest and compose myself. When I got cool again, I felt able to take my own part, without asking any one to help me.

Even if I had been treated kindly, I should certainly not have taken the money when there was a relative living with a claim to it. What did I want with a large fortune? To buy a husband with it, perhaps? No, no! from all that I have heard, the great Lord Chancellor was quite right when he said that a woman with money at her own disposal was 'either kissed out of it or kicked out of it six weeks after her marriage.' The one difficulty before me was not to give up my legacy, but to express my reply with sufficient severity, and at the same time with due regard to my own self-respect. Here is what I wrote:—

'Sir,—I will not trouble you by attempting to express my sincere regret on hearing of Sir Gerard Royland's death. You would probably form your own opinion on that subject also; and I have no wish to be judged by your unenviable experience of humanity for the second time.

'With regard to the legacy, feeling the deepest gratitude to my generous benefactor, I nevertheless refuse to receive the money.

'Be pleased to send me the necessary document to sign, for transferring my fortune to that relative of Sir Gerard's mentioned in your letter. The one condition on which I insist is, that my name shall be kept a secret from the person in whose favour I resign the money. I do not desire (even supposing that justice is done to my motives on this occasion) to be made the object of expressions of gratitude for only doing my duty.'

So it ended. I may be wrong, but I call that strong writing.

In due course of post, a formal acknowledgment arrived. I was requested to wait for the document until the will had been proved, and was informed that my name should be kept strictly secret in the interval. On this occasion, the executors were almost as insolent as the lawyer. They felt it their duty to give me time to consider a decision which had been evidently formed on impulse. Ah, how hard men are—at least, some of them!

I locked up the acknowledgment in disgust, resolved to think no more of it until the time came for getting rid of my legacy. I kissed poor Sir Gerard's little keepsake. While I was still looking at it, the good children came in, of their own accord, to

ask how I was. I was obliged to draw down the blind in my room, or they would have seen the tears in my eyes. For the first time since my mother's death, I felt the heartache. Perhaps the children made me think of the happier time when I was a child myself.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE will had been proved, and I was informed that the document was in course of preparation, when Mrs. Fosdyke returned from her visit to Scotland.

She thought me looking pale and worn. 'The time seems to me to have come,' she said, 'when I had better make you and Mr. Sax understand each other. Have you been thinking penitently of your own bad behaviour?'

I felt myself blushing. I *had* been thinking of my conduct to Mr. Sax—and I was heartily ashamed of it, too.

Mrs. Fosdyke went on, half in jest, half in earnest.

'Consult your own sense of propriety!' she said. 'Was the poor man to blame for not being rude enough to say No, when a lady asked him to turn over her music? Could *he* help it, if the same lady persisted in flirting with him? He ran away from her the next morning. Did you deserve to be told why he left us? Certainly not—after the vixenish manner in which you handed the bedroom candle to Miss Melbury. You foolish girl! Do you think I couldn't see that you were in love with him? Thank Heaven, he's too poor to marry you, and take you away from my children, for some time to come. There will be a long marriage engagement, even if he is magnanimous enough to forgive you. Shall I ask Miss Melbury to come back with him?'

She took pity on me at last, and sat down to write to Mr. Sax. His reply, dated from a country house some twenty miles distant, announced that he would be at Carsham Hall in three days' time.

On that third day the legal paper that I was to sign arrived by post. It was Sunday morning; I was alone in the schoolroom.

In writing to me the lawyer had only alluded to 'a surviving relative of Sir Gerard, nearly akin to him by blood.' The document was more explicit. It described the relative as being Sir Gerard's nephew, the son of his sister. The name followed.

It was Sextus Cyril Sax.

I have tried, on three different sheets of paper, to describe the effect which this discovery produced on me—and I have torn them up one after another. When I only think of it, my mind seems

to fall back into the helpless surprise and confusion of that time. After all that had passed between us—the man himself being then on his way to the house!—what would he think of me? what, in Heaven's name, was I to do?

How long I sat petrified, with the document on my lap, I never knew. Somebody knocked at the schoolroom door, and looked in and said something, and went out again. Then there was an interval. Then the door was opened again. A hand was laid kindly on my shoulder. I looked up—and there was Mrs. Fosdyke, asking, in the greatest alarm, what was the matter with me.

The tone of her voice roused me into speaking. I could think of nothing but Mr. Sax; I could only say, 'Has he come?'

'Yes—and waiting to see you.'

Answering in those terms, she glanced at the paper in my lap. In the extremity of my helplessness, I acted like a sensible creature at last. I told Mrs. Fosdyke all that I have told here.

She neither moved nor spoke until I had done. Her first proceeding, after that, was to take me in her arms and give me a kiss. Having so far encouraged me, she next spoke of poor Sir Gerard.

'We all acted like fools,' she announced, 'in needlessly offending him by protesting against his second marriage. I don't mean you—I mean his son, his nephew, and myself. If his second marriage made him happy, what business had we with the disparity of years between husband and wife? I can tell you this, Sextus was the first of us to regret what he had done. But for his stupid fear of being suspected of an interested motive, Sir Gerard might have known there was that much good in his sister's son.'

She snatched up a copy of the will, which I had not even noticed thus far. 'See what the kind old man says of you,' she went on, pointing to the words. I could not see them; she was obliged to read them for me. 'I leave my money to the one person living who has been more than worthy of the little I have done for her, and whose simple unselfish nature I know that I can trust.' I pressed Mrs. Fosdyke's hand; I was not able to speak. She took up the legal paper next.

'Do justice to yourself, and be above contemptible scruples,' she said. 'Sextus is fond enough of you to be almost worthy of the sacrifice that you are making. Sign—and I will sign next as the witness.'

I hesitated. 'What will he think of me?' I said.

'Sign!' she repeated, 'and we will see to that.'

I obeyed. She asked for the lawyer's letter. I gave it to her,

with the lines which contained the man's vile insinuation folded down, so that only the words above were visible, which proved that I had renounced my legacy, not even knowing whether the person to be benefited was a man or a woman. She took this, with the rough draft of my own letter, and the signed renunciation—and opened the door.

‘Pray come back, and tell me about it!’ I pleaded.

She smiled, nodded, and went out.

Oh, what a long time passed before I heard the long-expected knock at the door! ‘Come in,’ I cried impatiently.

Mrs. Fosdyke had deceived me. Mr. Sax had returned in her place. He closed the door. We two were alone.

He was deadly pale; his eyes, as they rested on me, had a wild, startled look. With icy cold fingers he took my hand, and lifted it in silence to his lips. The sight of his agitation encouraged me—I don’t to this day know why, unless it appealed in some way to my compassion. I was bold enough to look at him. Still silent, he placed the letters on the table—and then he laid the signed paper beside them. When I saw that, I was bolder still. I spoke first.

‘Surely you don’t refuse me?’ I said.

He answered, ‘I thank you with my whole heart; I admire you more than words can say. But I can’t take it.’

‘Why not?’

‘The fortune is yours,’ he said gently. ‘Remember how poor I am, and feel for me if I say no more.’

His head sank on his breast. He stretched out one hand, silently imploring me to understand him. I could endure it no longer. I forgot every consideration which a woman, in my position, ought to have remembered. Out came the desperate words, before I could stop them.

‘You won’t take my gift by itself?’ I said.

‘No.’

‘Will you take Me with it?’

---

That evening, Mrs. Fosdyke indulged her sly sense of humour in a new way. She handed me an almanack.

‘After all, my dear,’ she remarked, ‘you needn’t be ashamed of having spoken first. You have only used the ancient privilege of the sex. This is Leap Year.’

## Resurgo.

### A COMEDY.<sup>1</sup>

Cloth of gold, do not despise  
To match thyself with cloth of frieze.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PHILIP DORMER, *Earl L'Estrange*.  
MARQUIS OF IPSWICH (*son of the Duke of Lowestoft*).  
PRINCIPE CARLO SANFRIANO.  
ALDRED DORIAN.  
DUCA DI MONTELUPO.  
OLAIRE, *Madame Glyn*.  
LAURA, *Principessa Sanfriano*.  
LADY COWES.  
COUNTESS OF ST. ASAPH.  
MARCHESA ZANZINI.

*Other minor persons.*

### SCENE I.

*The long arbutus alley in the grounds of the Villa Ludovisi in Rome.*

*Present: L'ESTRANGE and IPSWICH.*

*L'Estrange.* Not to feel the Ludovisi Juno! What an utter Philistine you are!

*Ipswich.* Well, it's a big stone head. If you hadn't told me, I should have thought it was some severe mother-in-law of some dead Caius or Valerius.

*L'Estrange (lights a cigar).* How right Matthew Arnold is! What absolute, shameless, besotted blockheads English Philistines are!

*Ipswich.* One can't be a pillar of light like you, and adore marble dolls and pictures as brown as a cocoa-nut.

*L'Estrange.* Can a 'pillar' 'adore'? Confine yourself to Pall Mall jargon. You are only intelligible then.

*Ipswich.* But I say now, tell me, what *do* you æsthetes see in that big bust?

*L'Estrange.* What is the use of telling you? It is the purest ideal of womanhood that we possess.



*Ipswich* (*murmurs*). I prefer Jeanne Granier!

*L'Estrange*. It is the symbol of chastity, dignity, maternity, sovereignty. It is divine. It should be set in the centre of St. Peter's, and have the church dedicated to its worship. Almost I become a Comtist before that glorious incarnation of woman! If you had any mind or soul, you would feel so too: if you are a mere lump of flesh, clothed by Poole, you can never understand it, let it be explained to you how it may.

*Ipswich*. A lump of flesh! *I!* When I've won the Grand Military three times running!

*L'Estrange* (*with scorn*). A steeplechase is your limit and conception of the divine!

*Ipswich*. Oh, I say, it's not to be sneezed at; and you ride hard enough yourself sometimes at home.

*L'Estrange*. To ride is one thing; to tear over hurdles in a monkey's silk jacket, with all the scum of the betting ring cursing you as you break your beast's back in a ditch, is another. Who is that coming yonder? She knows you.

*Ipswich*. That is the Princess Sanfriano—such a jolly little cat!

*L'Estrange*. Surely not Italian?

*Ipswich*. Canadian. Awfully nice. She don't get on with her husband; but, herself, she runs pretty straight as yet. She'd no end of money; which the cad married her for, of course.

*Princess* (*coming close to them*). Lord Ipswich! Are you actually 'doing Rome' like Cook's cherubs?

*Ipswich*. Princess, will you allow one of my oldest friends to have the honour? *[Introduces them.]*

*Princess* (*to L'ESTRANGE*). Have you been long in Rome? I don't remember to have met you, and we all meet fifty times a week somewhere.

*L'Estrange*. I came last night only; but I always shun society in Rome.

*Princess*. Good gracious! Why?

*Ipswich*. He thinks it profanity here—money-changers in Temple, you know; that sort of feeling.

*Princess*. I see. Well, he will commit his first blasphemy at my house to-morrow. Mind you bring him.

*L'Estrange* (*murmurs sulkily*). Too kind—charmed.

*Princess* (*continues*). And as reward you shall see my beautiful and famous friend, Madame Glyon. She never goes out, so you can't see her anywhere else.

*L'Estrange* (*interested*). Not the artist?

*Princess*. Certainly, the artist. But prepare yourself; she is as lovely as she is clever. You have seen the things she can do?

*L'Estrange* (with a little shudder). *The things!* Certainly, Princess. I never miss the *Salon*, and the grand landscapes of Madame Glyon are one of the few spiritual and yet perfectly faithful works that the age has afforded us.

*Ipswich*. He praises something modern at last! Rome will fall! Do you know, Princess, he has been boring me all the morning about the big head in there; it appears to me to have a 'front' like my landlady in Duke Street, and wear the severity of countenance suitable to a Dame at Eton.

*Princess*. The Ludovisi Juno? Ah! I can't see much in it; but Madame Glyon raves about it.

*L'Estrange*. If you will allow me, I will go and rave again also at the goddess's shrine, for I find I left a volume of Winckelmann in the gallery.

*Princess*. Is that *the* L'Estrange?

*Ipswich*. What do you mean?

*Princess*. I mean the one who was such a brute to his wife.

*Ipswich*. Brute! Nonsense, my dear Princess; he made a horrible mistake, tried to remedy it, and *failed*.

*Princess*. He *killed her!* [*IPSWICH laughs out loud.*]

*Princess* (very severely). Oh! we know very well men never kill with neglect, or ill-temper, or insult! I say he *killed* her; killed her as much as if he had danced on her in Lancashire clogs, or put arsenic in her sherry. Why, he used to write notes to her about the wrong way she held her teacup!

*Ipswich*. Well, why not? He married a little peasant.

*Princess*. She was a gardener's daughter; Tennyson has sanctified that.

*Ipswich*. She was a gardener's daughter, and he saw her first hoeing potatoes.

*Princess*. Pineapples!

*Ipswich*. Potatoes! Princess, excuse me, but people don't hoe pineapples, and *she—was—hoeing!*

*Princess*. Very well, if she were? She didn't brain him with her hoe! *She* didn't ask him to marry her.

*Ipswich*. That was his Quixotic chivalry. He has repented it ever since.

*Princess*. Do you mean to say he has redeeming grace enough in him to feel remorse?

*Ipswich*. Oh, remorse! Come, I say! That is rather strong.

*Princess*. He ought to be haunted to his dying day. The Lords ought to have impeached him and hanged him in Palace Yard.

*Ipswich*. *Cara mia*, be reasonable! What did he do? You can't have heard the right story. He married the French peasant

when she was fifteen—beautiful as a dream, that I grant, but ignorant! . . . O Lord, you don't believe me, I see; but I assure you she tried her gloves on her feet, and asked the servants to warm her first ice!

*Princess (severely).* Not reasons to divorce a woman.

*Ipswich.* Divorce! Who talked of divorce? He bore it all like an angel.

*Princess.* While he was in love. Exactly. Then in six months' time all the blunders and the innocence that had seemed to him so divine, grew stupid, ugly, unendurable, I know, and she was sacrificed to the petty shame of a capricious young man who knew nothing of any passion save the basest and most fleeting form of it.

*Ipswich.* Not at all—nothing of the kind. Of course he began to see that he had done a thing that put him in a hole; that it was out of the question to take her about in London at all; of course he remembered his position.

*Princess.* The one god of the Englishman!

*Ipswich.* Then there was his mother—wild.

*Princess.* I can imagine the British matron under such circumstances! Poor Claire!

*Ipswich.* How did you know her name?

*Princess.* I was at the convent he sent her to—the beast! I was a good deal younger than she (we always *say* that, you know), and I was struck by her beauty, by her despair, by her history—as any child would be.

*Ipswich.* And she really did—kill—herself?

*Princess.* He really did kill her, if you want to speak the truth. They could do nothing with her, naturally; she was sunk in apathy and misery; nothing roused her; and when she drowned herself, he was as much her murderer as though he had killed her with his own rifle.

*Ipswich.* My dear Princess! How could he ever foresee it?

*Princess.* If he had had two grains of sense, a pin's point of a heart, he would have *known* it! Can you worship a woman for six months and make her mistress of all you possess, and then turn her off to be a schoolgirl in a convent?

*Ipswich (doggedly).* I don't see what else he could do. Of course in two years' time or so he would have taken her back. I don't see how he could have stood the chaff of London if he had gone on living with a Touraine peasant girl who didn't know the common A B C of manners, and——

*Princess (passionately).* You will excuse me, Lord Ipswich, but I prefer the veriest Don Juan of them all to such a cold-hearted,

paltry-spirited truckler to conventionalities. I say I prefer Mephistopheles himself! I can tell by the look of him that this wretch never cared a straw. He is as cold as a Canadian winter, and as self-engrossed as——

*Ipswich.* Well, you know it's eleven years ago. A fellow can't wear crape on his hat all his life.

*Princess.* Lord Ipswich, I hate you. Go and ask if my carriage is at the gate. I see my friend at the end of the alley, and I want to speak to her alone.

*Ipswich.* Why, she's living in your own house. Surely you'll let me stop, and send that boy sweeping yonder for your carriage?

*Princess.* How should that boy know my carriage? Go directly, or never venture to bow to me again.

*Ipswich.* Dread and unjust lady, I fly!

*Princess.* How glad I am to be rid of him! All this distance off, I can tell she has something to say to me, and this morning it can only be—Well, my dearest dear! You look pale.

*MME. GLYON enters: she looks grave, a little agitated; she seats herself on a stone bench beside the PRINCESS. For a moment she does not speak.*

*The Princess (eagerly and anxiously).* You have seen that man?

*MME. GLYON gives sign of acquiescence; then, in a low voice, says:*

You knew he was in Rome?

*Princess.* No—no—no! Good heavens! as if I would not have told you! But when did you see him? how? where? He was talking here with Ipswich a moment since.

*Mme. Glyon.* He was entering the sculpture gallery as I came out. *[Her voice is faint and grave.]*

*Princess.* And you said nothing happened?

*Mme. Glyon.* What should happen?

*Princess.* Much. If I were you!

*Mme. Glyon (smiling slightly).* You and I are very unlike, my dear. I have seen him often in the streets in Paris, and even in the *Salon* before one of my own pictures; it is nothing new; nothing to wonder at; only—only——

*Princess (striking her sunshade into the earth).* Only—scoundrels have the power to torture good women when they have lost all title even to be remembered by them.

*Mme. Glyon (dreamily).* I do not think he has a grey hair yet; and I, how many?

*Princess (with scorn).* I dare say he *dyes*!

*Mme. Glyon (indignantly).* Ridiculous! He never cared in the least how he looked, and he is not a *ci-devant* beau of sixty.

[*Her voice gives way and she bursts into tears.*]

*Princess (sympathetic and yet angry).* Oh, my darling, I know how you feel; and yet, how *can* you feel anything? You must be a very much more forgiving woman than I! I should hate him, loathe him, abhor him! I should tear his eyes out of his head—I should make him scenes wherever I met him, so that he would grow afraid of his very shadow!

*Mme. Glyon (with an effort).* Like the deserted mistress of the stereotyped boulevard novel! I am quite sure you would do nothing of the kind, Laura.

*Princess.* I should! Or probably I should have shot him long ago.

*Mme. Glyon.* *Quel mélodrame!* You are very violent to-day.

*Princess.* Because that idiot Ipswich has been having the impudence to defend him.

*Mme. Glyon.* You spoke of me?

*Princess.* We spoke of L'Estrange's marriage and of his conduct to his wife. Ipswich is his friend. He made lame excuses. It has left me rabid for the day. I tell you, my dear, I have not your divine forgiveness!

*Mme. Glyon (with coldness).* Who told you I forgave? Not I.

*Princess.* Your conduct! Patient Grizel was never gentler.

*Mme. Glyon.* You do not read character very well, Laura. You have been the best of friends to me, my love, but I think you have always taken me on trust. You have never understood what I felt or why I acted.

*Princess.* Oh no; you are like the Ludovisi Juno to me. I gaze; I try to admire; I am dumb; I fail to comprehend. I cannot appreciate the Colossal.

*Mme. Glyon (with a tired smile).* Am I colossal? I am as unconscious as the Juno herself.

*Princess.* Colossal! You are supernatural! Now, if you had torn his coat off his back in that gallery, you would have been human and akin to one.

*Mme. Glyon (sternly).* Do not talk in that fashion, Laura. It is quite unworthy of you, and you do not mean it.

*Princess.* I do.

*Mme. Glyon.* At all events, spare me the expression of your sentiments when they take that colour. Meanwhile, do something

else for me. You are intimate with Lord Ipswich. Learn from him if—if—his friend stays long at Rome. Because if he do, I will return to Paris and come to you some other time.

*Princess (rapidly).* I know he is going away directly—Asia Minor, I think. (*Aside.* I never dare tell her I have asked him for to-morrow night!) But, if you have passed him so often in Paris, it can't hurt you so very much to pass him in Rome!

*Mme. Glyon (in a low tone).* It hurts me always.

*Princess (kisses her hand with effusion).* Oh, my dear Claire, forgive me! I am a wretch, and, of course, I am quite incapable of understanding you. What does the proverb say? Fools, you know, always rush in where anybody else would be afraid to tread.

*Enter IPSWICH.*

Ten thousand pardons if I've seemed ages, but your people were right down at the end of Via S. Basilio.

*Princess.* Thanks. I must be off. I've got the Japanese Legation to breakfast, and it's one o'clock now.

*Ipswich.* Let me go to the gates with you. (*Aside to the PRINCESS.*) Is that your great artist? What a beautiful creature!

*Princess.* You shouldn't say so to me, as she is the precise opposite of everything I am! But she is very handsome. I can't introduce you, for she won't know strangers, and she hates Englishmen.

[*Exit from the alley; MME. GLYON a little behind the PRINCESS and IPSWICH.*]

## SCENE II.

*Drawing-room, Palazzo Sanfriano.*

*Present: The PRINCESS, MME. GLYON, LADY COWES, MARCHESA ZANZINI, IPSWICH, various minor personages. It is six o'clock. Tea on a guéridon.*

*Lady Cowes (whispering to M. ZANZINI).* Such a dear creature, the Princess; but she always does know such queer people!

*Marchesa.* Who you mean? La Glyon? Oh, but an artist, you know—that excuse everything!

*Lady Cowes.* In a studio, perhaps. Not in a drawing-room.

*Marchesa (laughing).* Ah, you dear English! You are always so ironed—I mean, so starched! For me, I care for my own house; but I care not who I meet other people's.

*Lady Cowes.* But the Princess introduces her!

*Marchesa.* What if she do? The new woman must call first. You not return her card. That very simple. Everything stop there.

*Lady Cowes.* But the Princess would never forgive it!

*Marchesa (stolidly).* Pooh! What matter what a little *bastarda* American like or no like?

*Lady Cowes (shocked).* Oh, *dearest* Marchesa! Indeed, indeed, the poor Princess was not—was not what you say. She was *nobody*, indeed; but I am sure her parents were quite respectable, and very rich. Indeed, my son, when he was fishing in Canada, *dined* with them!

*Marchesa (shaking with laughing).* Ah, ah! and the dinner is the sacrament of respectability; is it not so? But I mean not what you think. *Bastardo* with us, that mean, what you call it, mongrel—not born—*née de rien*—how you say it?

*Lady Cowes (still shocked).* Yes, yes; I see; quite so; you speak English so beautifully, Marchesa! Ah, dear Lady St. Asaph is over there. *[Rises and goes to that end of room.]*

*Marchesa (to IPSWICH).* Come here and recount me of the stipple-chase. You won, they tell me; is that so?

*Ipswich.* Yes; after a fashion. I rode an awful screw.

*Marchesa.* Screw? There is corkscrew; there is screw to a steamship; there is screw that you put into wood; how you can ride a screw? Tell me.

*Princess (passing by).* Marchesa, he will call you a purist.

*Marchesa.* Ah, my dear, as you are here, tell me, who is your friend La Glyon?

*Princess (colours a little).* She is Madame Glyon. Surely you have heard of her?

*Marchesa.* My child! She is one of those of whom one hears fifty thousand things every five minutes, but perhaps none of them may be very true things. That is why I ask you (because Lady Cow do ask me) who was she, whence comes she, who was M. Glyon—or, it maybe, who *is* he?

*Princess.* She is a widow. Forgive me, there are people coming in. *[Escapes to receive new comers.]*

*Marchesa.* She not care to talk about her. That is ill. I will ask Carlino.

*Ipswich.* Who is he?

*Marchesa.* Sanfriano. Carlino!

*Sanfriano.* Marchesa?

*Marchesa.* Who is La Glyon, your wife's friend? I spik English because *queste gente* they not spik Italian.

*Ipswich.* I'm afraid *we* haven't often such good manners in return!

*Marchesa.* Pooh! We not come to you for *manners*; we come to you for *morals*! Carlino, answer me, who is La Glyon?

*Sanfriano.* On my honour, I do not know. She was at the same convent with Laura in Paris. They are great friends.

*Marchesa.* And who was Monsieur Glyon?

*Sanfriano.* That I cannot tell you. A scoundrel, I believe, who married her when she was very young. You know, of course, that she is a great artist?

*Marchesa.* You never ask the Principessa more?

*Sanfriano.* I never ask the Principessa anything; quite content if she return the compliment. There is the Californian beauty. Look at her. Is she not adorable? Fresh as a daisy; white as a lily! [*He goes to greet the Californian beauty.*]

*Marchesa.* There is something bad. I shall not send her a card to my ball.

*Lady St. Asaph.* How do, Marchesa? How are your sweet little grandchildren? They were quite the stars of the babies' ball at our embassy. Do tell me—(*drops her voice*)—you know everything. Lady Cowes has been making me quite uncomfortable about that Frenchwoman over there, who is staying with the Princess. She says she is—well, you know, not at all what one likes to meet where one visits. Is it true?

*Marchesa.* I shall not send her card for my ball; Sanfriano think not well of her; her husband, he disappear; not a soul know who she was.

*Lady St. Asaph.* But it is intolerable of the Principessa! I am grieved I brought my girls.

*Marchesa (grimly).* She will not eat dem. She only get all the men round her.

*Lady St. Asaph.* Perhaps she is *separated*!

*Marchesa.* Dat is very likely. Why not?

*Lady St. Asaph.* But it is horrible, scandalous! Couldn't one speak to the French ambassador?

*L'Estrange (to PRINCESS).* Dear Principessa, will you not do for me the kindness that you denied me the other night?

*Princess (nervously).* Madame Glyon never makes new acquaintances.

*L'Estrange.* But she and I should have so many themes of talk in common, and honestly, I admire her pure and wonderful genius so greatly.

*Princess (pettishly).* Oh, she is bored to death with people praising her genius.

*L'Estrange.* Undiscerning praise, perhaps. Nothing more wearisome; but—



*Ipswich.* But this Ruskin of the drawing-room; this St. James Street prophet; this æsthetic of æsthetics, who sees no excellence out of Lionardo, will give her a very different thing to vulgar compliment.

*L'Estrange (coldly).* Certainly; I should presume to offer her sympathy.

[*At that moment MME. GLYON, who is at the tea-table, has the lace at her wrist caught by the spirit-flame of the silver kettle; her sleeve takes fire. L'ESTRANGE is quicker than anyone: he extinguishes the burning lace with his handkerchief, and is slightly burnt in the palms of his hands. MME. GLYON says nothing, but sits down and grows very pale. Buzz of excitement from others round them.*

*L'Estrange (smiling).* Indeed, I am not hurt. The skin scorched—nothing more. Madame Glyon, fate has been kinder to me than the Princess. I have implored in vain a presentation to you. Will you not allow the kettle to be my sponsor? If you will not, I assure you that I will pour vitriol on my fingers and declare that I am crippled for life by saving you!

*Mme. Glyon (bows coldly).* I have to thank you for great presence of mind. I fear you are hurt yourself.

*L'Estrange.* Would that I were! But, at all events, let the kettle's misdemeanour allow me to introduce myself, and—will you not at least give me a cup of tea?

*Mme. Glyon (she pours him out a cupful as she speaks).* As you please. [He seats himself at the table.

*Lady Cowes (to LADY ST. ASAPH).* Is it not extraordinary, my dear Anne, how women of that kind of character always attract men?

*Lady St. Asaph.* Because they lay themselves out for it!

*Marchesa Zanzini.* Ah ha! And what do your girls do at your lawn-tennis? I not wish to know La Glyon, but I am quite sure she never jump about in jersey with perspiring man in shirt!

*Lady Cowes (to LADY ST. ASAPH).* How anxious the little Princess looks because Lord L'Estrange has got attracted by that woman! But *why* does she have her here? Is it because—(*mysteriously*)—because the Prince *compels* her to be civil, do you think?

*Lady St. Asaph (also mysteriously).* It can hardly be that. You know he would not be *allowed* by the Duchess Danta. She holds him *so* close.

*Lady Cowes.* Then, what *can* it be? She was at the same convent as the Princess. Is it possible she knows of any school-girl imprudence, and *therefore* has to be propitiated?

*Marchesa Zanzini.* Suppose that it only just is that they do like each other?

*Lady St. Asaph (with a sour smile).* I don't think that's possible! Why, when they are together she actually *kills* the little Princess, overtops her, washes her out! No; there *must* be a reason for the friendship. We will hope that it is a good one.

*Marchesa (with a chuckle).* And pray that it is a wicked one, eh? Oh, look not so scandalised. Good reasons, they give other folk no diversions! I cannot endure them myself.

*Lady Cowes.* You are cynical, Marchesa!

*Marchesa.* Ah no! It is not me who have ever the spleen!

*Lady Cowes.* To be sure—of course; your lovely sun, no fog, no east wind; who *could* be ill-natured in Italy?

*Marchesa.* To be certain, nobody, unless they bring with them their ill-nature in the train, as they do bring their umbrellas, and their sponges, and their—how you call it—portable baths?

*Ipswich (aside, laughing).* How merciless you are, Marchesa!

*Marchesa (aside).* Ah! that Miladi Cow, she make me impatient. It is just that she want Milord L'Estrange for her daughter Luisa. La Glyon, she is nobody; I not know her myself; but she *is* handsome, and to men she is cold. See! she leave L'Estrange now and go and talk to that old Monsignore instead. Your friend, he look gloom—how you say it?—glum? He not like to be *planté-là* alone with the teacups!

*Ipswich (with surprise).* She does seem uncivil to him.

*Marchesa (with sarcastic smile).* You Englishmen, you so spoiled by your own women, you think any woman who not throw herself at your head uncivil. Your women are forwards, and that is always bad. It spoil men.

*Ipswich (with a sigh).* Well, they do butter us, and come after us, too much at home, that's true. You can't get away from 'em anywhere.

*Marchesa (grimly).* Poor creature! You honey; they flies. Now here, it is *we* are the honey. That is prettier.

*Ipswich.* Much prettier, and a long shot better fun.

*Marchesa.* Long shot! You speak strange English, you young men. Well, I go; it is seven o'clock. I dine your embassy. You dine too? *A rivederci.*

[*A general rising; people go out one by one. L'ESTRANGE approaches the PRINCESS to say adieu.*]

*L'Estrange.* Madame, your friend is too cruel; she scarcely deigns to speak to me.

*Princess (sharply).* I am sure you must have done so much

cruelty yourself, and endured so little from others, that the change is the best thing possible for you!

*L'Estrange (a little coldly).* Certainly Madame Glyon is a great artist and I am only a poor dilettante; still, I cannot see what I can have done to offend her, and——

*Ipswich.* You have been *snubbed*? How delicious! I could kiss the carpet where Madame Glyon's feet have just passed! It is the very thing you have wanted all your life long, only it comes too late!

*L'Estrange.* Really, Ipswich, you have a good deal of the Margate 'Arry about you. You have all the wit of a cheap-tripper. Princess, you are so exquisitely kind yourself that I feel confident you will soften the heart of your friend towards one of the most sincere admirers of her genius, and, if I may add it without offence—of herself.

*Princess (giving him her hand in farewell).* I think I shall do nothing of the sort. To be 'out in the cold' a little must be such excellent discipline for you who have been brought up in a hothouse amidst parasites all your life.

*L'Estrange.* A frost more often kills than cures, Madame.

*Ipswich.* Princess! You *will* promise me the cotillon to-night? Pray—

*Princess.* I will tell you, after the last waltz.

[*They take leave of her and exeunt.*]

*Princess (left alone).* Marco, go and beg Madame Glyon to be so good as to come to me a moment. [*Servant exit.*]

*Princess (aloud).* Good heavens! What wretches men are! If she were his wife now, he would be finding every fault in her that a human creature could have, and be for ever writing notes to her about conventionalities, and breaches of precedence at her last dinner-party! Just because she seems something new, uncommon, indifferent, incomprehensible, the base weak monster is piqued and almost in love! They are all alike—all alike! If I were but somebody else's wife, Sanfrano would be mad about me, and ruin himself in five minutes to satisfy my caprice or my curiosity. Because I *am* his wife, he never even sees what sort of gown I've got on; and if he is obliged to spend an hour with me, he goes to sleep! And yet I am ten, fifteen, twenty million times prettier than that yellow, lean, black-browed Danta woman! (*MME. GLYON enters.*) Ah, dearest Claire, how good of you to come down again; but there are heaps of time before dinner, and I did so want to tell you—you have made that man in love with you.

*Mme. Glyon.* Laura! If you were anyone else——

*Princess.* Than myself, you would leave my house before

dinner! But I am myself, dear, and privileged to say anything. Don't look so stern, and so reproachful. If you choose, in a fortnight's time he will be as much in love with you as—as——

*Mme. Glyon.* As he was with a gardener's daughter in Touraine!

*Princess.* Oh, Claire! you are the proudest woman in the world.

*Mme. Glyon.* No, I am the humblest, or should be, for I have been the most humbled.

*Princess.* But now, if you took your revenge?

*Mme. Glyon.* Revenge? A ghastly word, not one I like or use.

*Princess.* It was a religion here in Rome, and should be yours. Oh, my dear, I know we are not in the days of daggers, and that if we were, you would not use one; but I mean a vengeance innocent enough, but just. Make this man love you, and then, when he will suffer tortures in your rejection, tortures of passion, tortures of pride, then—avenge with one word 'No' the gardener's daughter of Touraine. You will? You will?

*Mme. Glyon.* Laura! you talk as if life were a game of tennis, or a struggle between two gamesters—nothing more. You never understand——

*Princess.* I never understand life as *you* see and read it. To accept outrage and neglect, to condemn yourself to solitude and sterility; to let the destroyer of it pass off unpunished, and have society like a gilded ball at his foot, to kick or play with—this is what you think honour and dignity and duty. Well, to me it is a folly, nothing more; a grand, idiotic, sublime, and most useless tomfoolery. There!

*Mme. Glyon.* My dear, we see things with such different eyes. I said so the other day. I grieve that I listened to you, and stayed here against my better judgment; but who could foresee the little accident that gave him opportunity and leave to speak to me?

*Princess.* And he admires you beyond everything; your pictures he thinks perfection; yourself——

*Mme. Glyon (with heat and pain).* Oh, spare me, for heaven's sake, more evidence that no ray of recollection dawns on the utter night of his absolute forgetfulness. His admiration—*his!* A dog would have more recognition, more instinct, more remembrance.

*Princess (surprised).* But you always dreaded any recognition?

*Mme. Glyon (losing her calmness).* Who has said that our

granted wishes are our curses? Do not mistake me; I know that any suspicion on his part would lead to misery for him and for myself, and were there any chance of it, I would put seas and deserts between him and me. Yet—ah, my dear, women are weak! when he looks at me as on a stranger, when he speaks to me with the compliment of society, it is hard to bear.

*Princess.* But, dearest, do be reasonable. To him you have been dead so long: there is your memorial marble in his chapel. What can you expect him to——

*Mme. Glyon.* I know, I know! I said the same thing myself the other day in the Ludovisi gardens. Yet one might have thought—when I spoke—some accent, some tone might have touched some chord in his heart.

*Princess.* He has none! He never had any. Would he have done what he did——

*Mme. Glyon.* What he did was done from pride. He was ashamed of me; he was mortified before his world by my ignorance and my errors. Perhaps I should have understood that, but I was so young. You cannot give a child of fifteen all the most exquisite joys of love and life for a year's time, and then drive her away from all the happiness you have taught her and consign her to the dreary tedium of a convent life without making her mad or worse! I loved him—you know how I loved him! Could he widow me at sixteen and think I should be patient? And then to know how he had wearied of me, how he blushed for me, because I knew not all the little laws of his own world; how every day had been a greater shame and bitterness of regret to him until he had thrust me out of sight and memory under the sophist's pretext that I had received no education and should gain it best amongst the women of my own religion! Oh God! the torture of it, the martyrdom, the death in life! And you think to please me and console me because you tell me that he admires my pictures and my face!

*Princess.* Claire! you frighten me. Pray don't be angry. I only thought, I only meant, if I were you I should revenge myself. You are famous, you are beautiful, you are independent; I would make him die of love for me, and die in vain! He has no heart, but he has passions. I would wring his very soul!

*Mme. Glyon.* You would do nothing of the kind if you had loved him once. Nor would there be decency or dignity in any such poor revenge as that. Besides—what a romance you weave because he scorched his hand! He only sought me because he is a connoisseur, and therefore artists are the poor moths he puts under his microscope.

*Princess.* But you must feel proud of having achieved such a position for yourself.

*Mme. Glyon.* I can be proud of nothing. A man loved me, and wearied of me. That is humiliation enough to crush the pride of an empress into dust.

*Princess.* You should not be humiliated at all. You are greater than he. You should scorn him.

*Mme. Glyon (with her teeth set).* Perhaps I do. But that cannot take the sting from the wound. Yes, it was cruel, and so contemptible! He was a man of the world; he knew its codes, its exactions, its false estimates; he knew also that a peasant child, taken from field and orchards, who only knew the Credo and the alphabet, could not by any miracle conceive the ways and the demands, the rigour and the mockery of a patrician society. He should have sent me to the convent first, and waited until I was more fit for his people and his sphere. Indeed—indeed—had he said even to me, when he did send me from him, ‘Do this for love of me, my child,’ I would, I think, have borne the exile and the shame of it. But he grew colder and colder, more silent every day; he was too courteous to say to me all he felt, but in his eyes I read the daily humiliation that I was to him, and when he wrote to me—*wrote to me!*—that he was going on an Indian tour, and would be away two years, and those two years he wished me to pass at the convent learning, as he phrased it, the ordinary rules and graces of society; what girl of my age then could have endured such agony? And I—I adored the very dust he trod, I would kiss the heads of the dogs he had laid his hand on! To him, no doubt, it was but one of many episodes; an idyll lived out and found insipid. No doubt I was ignorant, and for him my ignorance was fatigue and shame; but to me, he and his love were all my life, and I could not tell why what he had earlier praised as pure and fresh and unconventional should have later lost all charm for him—I could not tell—hush! There is the Prince!

*Prince (entering).* *Care mie!* are you not going to dress to-night? We dine in ten minutes, Laura, and then there will be two hours wanted for you to get into your ball costume, and we must be punctual, since the Queen goes.

*Princess.* Oh! the Court never gets anywhere till eleven. You always fidget so! and you are always late yourself. My maid always gets me into my clothes in fifteen minutes by the clock. I do not paint my skin.

*Prince.* There is so very little to put on you when it is question of a ball! Two inches of corsage and a little wreath for a sleeve. It might be done in *five* minutes!

*Princess.* My gowns are always decent. The Duchess Danta's exhibition of her vertebræ——

*Mme. Glyon (pushing her gently to the door).* My dear! what is the use of that? It prevents nothing, and embitters everything.

*Prince (angrily).* Madame Glyon, you see! She prick, prick, prick me every hour like that, and then she do wonder that I like better other women!

*Mme. Glyon.* My dear Prince, what pricks you is your conscience. You know you do neglect Laura sadly.

*Prince (opening his eyes widely).* I leave her alone. She has her own way. I only want her do the same by me. *Ma quando sono gelose le donne!*—

*Mme. Glyon (smiling).* No wife is wise. But I shall be late for dinner. [Exit.]

*Prince (to himself).* That is a woman I could have got on with; not that I care about her. Antonio! *un bicchierrino di Vermouth.* [Exit towards dining-room.]

### SCENE III.

*Studio of Aldred Dorian. Tapestryed Walls, Paintings, Marbles, Bronzes, Carved Chairs, Artistic Litter.*

*Present:* DORIAN and MME. GLYON.

*Dorian (turning dissatisfied from one of his easels).* You are a greater artist than I.

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh! *pas de phrases!* You are a Titian, and paint physiognomy for posterity; I am but a poor limner of wind-mills, corn-fields, and little brooks that wash the linen.

*Dorian.* You portray the face of Nature. It is the higher art. The sunset is nobler than a rosy cheek.

*Mme. Glyon.* I can only paint a rosy apple.

*Dorian.* Who would dare say that of you? You are as true, as grave, and as lofty as Millet.

*Mme. Glyon (smiling).* You must be a very great man to say that of a woman—if you mean it.

*Dorian.* I always mean what I say, and to you I could not use an empty flattery if my lips could frame one (*he pauses, hesitating*). Madame—Claire—you are greater in the art we love than I am, far greater, but I can own it with frankness and without jealousy, because—because—cannot you divine why?

*Mme. Glyon.* Because you have a noble nature, and also too great a distrust of yourself.

*Dorian.* No! It is because I love you.

*Mme. Glyon* (*staring at him with wide-opened eyes*). Love me? *Me*? Are you mad, Dorian?

*Dorian.* Mad? No; if I be, it is a lunacy that many share. Have you never guessed, never seen? I should not dare to speak, only our common love for our common art gives me some courage. I am rich, for an artist; forgive me if I say so vulgar a thing, but I mean that I have the power to make your life a happy one, one of leisure to study, and aspire to the highest heights, which those who must needs work for bread can never do. I love you, I adore you—I adore you in the double form of woman and muse. If you would not scorn me—you have showed me some esteem, some friendship—if you would be my wife—

*Mme. Glyon* (*stupefied*). Your wife? Yours? You forget yourself strangely. Do not make me regret the confidence I have felt in a comrade, in a fellow-worker!

*Dorian* (*with some anger*). Madame! how do I forget myself in offering to you an honest name, an honourable love? I worship you, I believe in you, I kneel at your feet. What wrong is there? I do not seek to know your past; I do not, I will not, ask you of your marriage; the man is dead. I would forget he ever lived.

*Mme. Glyon.* Pray cease! I cannot hear you. I shall never marry—again. I must ask your pardon for my hasty words. You do me much honour. I will endeavour to be grateful.

*Dorian.* I want no gratitude. I want your love, your beauty, your genius, your grand and tranquil nature; I want you.

*Mme. Glyon.* Mr. Dorian, you will compel me to leave your studio.

*Dorian* (*seizing her hands*). You will never listen! You will never cease to care for that dead man who they all say was but a brute to you!

*Mme. Glyon.* I can but say what I have said. I shall never marry. I shall never love—again.

[*DORIAN releases her hand, and, without a word, leaves his studio hurriedly by one door as there enter from another the PRINCESS SANFRIANO, the DUCA DI MONTELUPO, and L'ESTRANGE.*

*Princess.* Have we kept you waiting too long, Claire? But I know that you and Dorian can always talk together twelve hours at a stretch. But, goodness! where is Dorian? You told him we were coming?

*Mme. Glyon* (*with a little embarrassment*). He went out a little while ago. No doubt he thought we were old friends enough



to be content with his works without himself. You know they are the best part of every artist!

*Princess (looks at her quickly).* I shall wait till he comes back. I shall get his tea, and the dear little Persian cups and the apostle spoons, and the *niello* tray, and the Roman *maritozzi*, and his negro will bring us his *samovâr*. (*Rings; a black servant appears*). Bring the urn, Eblis; you see we are old friends; I know your name.

[*She busies herself getting the Persian cups off an old oaken 'cabinet.'* MONTELUPO engrossed in helping her.

*L'Estrange (to MME. GLYON).* It is strange of Dorian. I saw him an hour ago, and told him we were to meet you here and see his treasures. *Entre nous*, I think himself a much finer creation than his works. I care nothing for his pictures, but he is a rather noble fellow. You seem to know him well?

*Mme. Glyon.* I have seen him often in Paris. I think he is a great artist, but his manner perhaps is hard and his colour too thin to do his fine conceptions justice.

*L'Estrange.* He cannot be named by you.

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh, why compare a pastoral and an epic?

*L'Estrange.* True! Besides, there is nothing except Turner's with which one could compare all that you give us.

*Mme. Glyon.* You cannot be serious. You abhor modern art. Why except from your censure what a woman does?

*L'Estrange.* One must except Rosa Bonheur and Mme. Glyon. Would you tell me—do not think it barren or impertinent curiosity, all these questions are of such vital interest—would you tell me where you studied, and under whom?

*Mme. Glyon.* Chiefly in the open air and from Nature.

*L'Estrange.* Ah, how right! It is the indoor work, the copying, the slavery to *technique*, the hot-stove atmosphere, the gas-lit colouring that are the curses of modern painters.

*L'Estrange.* Then—may I ask again—although you live in Paris, it was not there that you studied chiefly?

*Mme. Glyon.* No.

*L'Estrange.* Madame! I see you think me a rude Englishman, full of graceless and rough inquisitiveness. But, believe me, it is my entire sympathy with your marvellous works which makes me long to learn under what influences they were inspired.

*Mme. Glyon.* That is only the language of compliment.

*L'Estrange.* On my honour, no!

*Mme. Glyon.* Lord L'Estrange, when a man speaks to a woman, his word of honour is a very elastic thing!

*L'Estrange.* I do not see why you should disbelieve me.

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh! perhaps you mean it now.

*L'Estrange.* Now? Why, now? If I find an infinite charm of the finest feeling finely rendered in your works, my judgment is at least mature, and not likely to be capricious. Alas! I am young no longer.

*Mme. Glyon.* Caprice is not a thing especially of youth.

*L'Estrange (impatient).* On what grounds do you think me capricious?

*Mme. Glyon.* You have the reputation of it.

*L'Estrange.* I do not think reputation is just to me, then. My taste never varies. One must be faithful in art, or be indifferent to it.

*Mme. Glyon.* To art!

*Princess (bringing a cup of tea, MONTELUPO following with cakes).* Here, Claire! I always thought Dorian's studio one of the nicest places in Rome when he was in it; now he is out of it, it is the very nicest.

*L'Estrange (handing tea to MME. GLYON).* Poor Dorian! And you are eating his excellent *maritozzi*, Princess, and have no more gratitude than that? (*He notices MME. GLYON's left hand.*) She has no ring on; did Glyon never live except in fiction? (*aside*). [*He seats himself again on low chair beside her.*]

*L'Estrange.* Now that your charming friend is gone to flirt with Montelupo once again over the *samovâr*, let me implore you, tell me something of yourself.

*Mme. Glyon.* Artists have no biographies, and their memoirs are written on their canvases.

*L'Estrange.* Nay, who has not made a pilgrimage to Urbino for Raffaele's sake? I would make a pilgrimage to *your* Urbino.

*Mme. Glyon.* What if it landed you in a cabin?

*L'Estrange.* Then the cabin would be as sacred as a temple.

*Mme. Glyon.* Lord L'Estrange, you are an admirable flatterer.

*L'Estrange (angrily).* I never flatter! Flattery is as vulgar as abuse. But I must not weary you for what you will not say.

*Mme. Glyon (impatiently).* There is nothing to say. I was a happy child. I was not a happy woman. Accident taught me to find solace and strength in art. There is the end.

*L'Estrange (smiling).* Your history must be far from its end! But what fate, what creature, could be vile enough and blind enough to cause you sorrow?

*Mme. Glyon (curtly).* My husband.

*L'Estrange.* He must have been a brute, indeed, and a mad-man too!

*Mme. Glyon.* Neither. He was but an egotist, and changeable.  
*L'Estrange.* Changeable! When *you* were given to him as his 'fixed star'? Good heavens! That the baseness of a low-natured man should have the power to wound the great soul of such a woman as you are!

*Mme. Glyon.* His was not a low nature; nor was he base. I had the misfortune to be his wife—that was all! Come, we must look at Dorian's work for the Academy and the *Salon*, or we shall not be able to excuse ourselves for stealing his tea and his *maritozzi*.

[*She rises and turns one of the easels towards a better light.*

*Princess* (*aside to MME. GLYON*). What was he saying to you?

*Mme. Glyon.* Pretty phrases—the small change of society. Go and talk to him. If you are so engrossed by the little Duke, the club will be told to-night of the good fortune of Azzelino Montelupo.

*Princess* (*pettishly*). It would serve Carlino right. But then, to be sure, Carlino would not care.

*Mme. Glyon.* I think he would care, and take his sabre out of its scabbard. Duca, I want to see some wondrous missals that no one is allowed to see at the Vatican. You have two uncles Cardinals. Can you get me permission?

[*She keeps MONTELUPO with her, strolling from easel to easel.*

*Princess* (*to L'ESTRANGE*). Do you care for Dorian's things?

*L'Estrange.* Dear Princess, why will you always call pictures 'things'?

*Princess.* Because I am of the great uneducated. I don't care the least for any picture. I only like Claire's because they are Claire's.

*L'Estrange.* Affection *versus* comprehension. It is a very old question which is worth the more. I see you can be a good friend, Princess—that is even rarer than true appreciation of art.

*Princess.* I thought nobody in creation understood art except yourself and Mr. Ruskin. It is no merit in *me* to be a good friend to *her*. She is the noblest woman upon earth.

*L'Estrange* (*with unusual warmth*). Of that I am quite sure, though I have had the honour only to know Madame Glyon ten short days.

*Princess.* You admire her?

*L'Estrange.* Who could fail to do so?

*Princess.* I don't think that's an answer. It is an *équivoque*.

*L'Estrange.* Then let me say it unequivocally, she is altogether my ideal of a perfect woman; her personal beauty just gives

the softening touch that strength and genius in her sex are too often without; she is quite honestly that, I think. But I perceive she will not let me say so.

*Princess.* She distrusts all praise.

*L'Estrange.* Surely she is no cynic?

*Princess.* No. But she was badly treated, wickedly treated; and you know, when one is so, it warps all one's belief in anything. I know that.

*L'Estrange.* Oh, Princess, you never can have known anything like neglect!

*Princess (sentimentally).* Ah, none can guess what a woman suffers in silence! You think because I chatter like a parrot——

*L'Estrange (irrelevantly).* Princess, you really believe that Madame Glyon has been embittered by her marriage?

*Princess.* I never said she was *bitter*. She could not be. She has too sweet a temper. But you know—you know—he was such a wretch.

*L'Estrange.* Is it possible? to such a woman? Who was he? what was he?

*Princess.* Oh, he was—he was nothing at all. A gentleman, you know; but that don't make any difference. They are the worst, I think.

*L'Estrange.* How terribly you are *portée* against us! But do tell me more about him—what did he do?

*Princess.* I am afraid I can't talk about her if she don't talk about herself. She wouldn't like it; she would never forgive me. Claire is very sensitive.

*L'Estrange.* And Madame Sanfiano is very loyal. You are friends of long standing?

*Princess.* We were at the same school.

*L'Estrange.* And what was her maiden name?

*Princess.* I—I really forget. I always called her all sorts of pet names. Why are you so interested in all this? Is it purely artistic, æsthetic—what is the word?

*L'Estrange.* It seems to me simply natural that, meeting so beautiful and famous a person, one should feel a desire to know all her history, all her influences—all, in a word, that has united to make her what she is.

*Princess.* Yes? Well, I don't think I should trouble about who she was. She is *herself* the cleverest, the bravest, the best of living creatures. By-the-bye, do you know, I am quite certain that Dorian's disappearance *means* something. He has been in love with her for years, and I do believe that, just as we came in, he had told her so.

*L'Estrange.* Would she marry again?

*Princess.* She says no; but of course she would if she cared for anybody. She never does; that is the worst of it.

*L'Estrange.* She is wedded to her liberty and solitude? Dorian is a fine fellow, but very inferior to her. I should not think that she would stoop to him.

*Princess.* I suppose she didn't, as he disappeared; but I don't know about the inferiority. He is very eminent, and he is so good—so good!

*L'Estrange.* Princess! whenever were daughters of Eve won by goodness?

*Princess.* But she isn't a daughter of Eve at all. She is utterly above all *our* follies.

*L'Estrange.* And above ours too. Perhaps that was her fault in her husband's eyes. It would humiliate some men.

*Princess.* Would it you?

*L'Estrange.* Surely not. I think one should always feel before one's wife a certain reverence, a certain shame at one's own memories.

*Princess.* I will tell Carlino! It is very pretty and chivalrous sounding; but you know as well as I do, Lord L'Estrange, that nobody ever *does* feel that. Once married, you only see your wife's faults—her freckles, if she have any—her foibles, her follies; if her feet are large, it is of them you think; and if she have exquisite feet, but a large nose, then it is only the nose you see.

*L'Estrange.* Princess, that is not love.

*Princess.* It is as much love as there is. What is love? A dizziness, a syncope, a dash of cold water, an unpleasant awakening, and as we wake, we throw the cold water over everybody else.

*L'Estrange.* Who is cynical now?

*Mme. Glyon.* Laura, it is growing late; we shall have no time for the Pincio.

*Princess.* And you never will miss a sunset from the Hill. Now, it never occurs to *me* to look at the sky. I think you artists get a great deal more enjoyment than we do, and you get it out of nothing.

*L'Estrange* (*softly, looking at MME. GLYON*). The eyes that see!—yes, they are the most precious gift of heaven.

*Princess.* Come, we will take you and Montelupo both up there; he and I will talk, and you and she shall look.

*Mme. Glyon.* Laura, I have forgotten that I promised to be with the Countess Dantzic at the Molinara by six o'clock; I must for once renounce the evening red and gold behind St. Peter's.

*Princess (aside to MME. GLYON).* Oh dear, that is because I asked him to drive with us! How could I help it? I brought him.

*Mme. Glyon (in the same tone).* You could have helped bringing him.

*L'Estrange (coldly eyeing MME. GLYON).* Dear Princess, you are always too kind, but I fear I must renounce the pleasure. I dine with a Prince of the Church to-night who has the bad taste always to begin his admirable soups at sunset.

*Princess.* Well, I shall not take *you*, Azzelino, all alone behind my horses. You would be so flattered you would be insufferable till Lent. You can walk somewhere like Lord L'Estrange; I will go in my solitude and stare at the sky, till I manage to see something in it. Did you say the Molinara, Claire?

*Mme. Glyon.* Yes, my old Düsseldorf friend is there; you can call and take me up after your drive.

*Princess.* What a fuss we are all making! People talk less nowadays of going over to New Zealand or the North Pole! Cross? (*to MONTELUPO, who had murmured in her ear*). Yes; I am cross. I generally am, and these *maritozzi* are very indigestible.

*L'Estrange.* If you would excuse my escort down the stairs, I think I will leave a line for Dorian.

*Princess.* Pray do, and tell him I am the culprit as regards the *maritozzi*—I always own my sins.

[*They leave the studio: L'ESTRANGE remains. He throws himself into a large gilt leather chair, and lights a cigar.*]

*L'Estrange.* Why does that woman shun me? It is quite unmistakable that she does. Her eyes are frank and pure, yet one could swear she had a secret she was ashamed of; it might be low birth, but that is impossible. She has *race* in every line, in every movement. Something there must be, because even the little chattering fool of a Sanfrano keeps her own counsel. If ever I saw a noble woman, she is one; and yet—she wears no rings, she will not say who this dead man was, nor where they lived, nor where he died; perhaps she was deceived—perhaps Dorian would know. He has been a friend of hers in Paris, and there is a freemasonry between artists. I will write and ask him, and somebody must make excuse for this litter of teacups and apostle spoons.

*Enter DORIAN; he is pale and grave; he pushes back the tapestry from a secret door. Seeing L'ESTRANGE, he pauses, disconcerted.*

*Dorian.* I thought you were all gone.

*L'Estrange.* Most hospitable of celebrities! You are too complimentary (*then he looks hard at DORIAN and ceases to smile*). Why, Dorian, what has happened? Have you been near us all this time?

*Dorian (pointing to the door by which he entered).* Yes, I was at home. I heard a little that you said: not much. I heard you say how greatly I am inferior to her. You were right; I had said the same to her myself this afternoon.

*L'Estrange.* My dear Dorian——

*Dorian.* Do not deny it. I know a lie, even a kind one, chokes you as it chokes me. We Englishmen have not a flexible trachea for falsehood. It is often awkward for us.

*L'Estrange.* But what ails you? Why did you shut yourself away from us?

*Dorian.* Because the little parrot of a Princess said aright; the only woman I have ever wished to make my wife had, five minutes earlier, rejected me. You were quite correct in thinking that she would not stoop to me.

*L'Estrange.* Dorian! I spoke idly. I never meant——

*Dorian.* You spoke as you thought; why not? She is greater than I am. Love might bridge that, if it were there; but it is not—on her side.

*L'Estrange.* You must—pardon me the question—but you must know her history, since you would give her your name?

*Dorian.* I have no idea of her history. I am confident it must be a blameless one, when I look at her.

*L'Estrange.* And you know nothing?

*Dorian.* Nothing. Her life in Paris is austere and untainted by a breath of calumny. That I do know. But beyond that nothing. Do you think I would insult her with a doubt?

*L'Estrange.* But in your wife?

*Dorian.* She will no more be my wife than will the marble Ariadne of the Capitol. But I would make her my wife without a single question that would seem also a suspicion.

*L'Estrange.* That is very noble, but——

*Dorian.* You would say the same if you loved her.

*L'Estrange.* I think not. 'The world is with me,' and I share its judgments—if you will, its prejudices.

*Dorian.* Yes; once you committed for the world's sake the most selfish sin of your life.

*L'Estrange.* What?

*Dorian.* I mean the exile of that poor child you married.

*L'Estrange* (*annoyed and slightly embarrassed*). Why rake among the ashes of dead years? I acted naturally, I think; how could I tell she would so take it to heart——

*Dorian.* As to destroy herself. I suppose you could not. I never saw her; but between two people there is always one who sacrifices, one who is sacrificed.

*L'Estrange.* And you really, in all truth, know nothing of the past of this singular woman to whom you would trust your peace, your honour?

*Dorian.* Absolutely nothing.

*L'Estrange.* Not even who was Glyon?

*Dorian.* No.

*L'Estrange.* It is incomprehensible.

*Dorian.* When you married that hapless peasant child, did you hesitate because——

*L'Estrange.* That was utterly different. She *was* a child. I knew the absolute innocence and childishness of her life. No suspicion could rest on her.

*Dorian* (*going nearer to him*). And if you say that any suspicion lies on Claire Glyon, I will never admit you in these doors again.

*L'Estrange* (*touched*). My dear fellow, you are very generous; you are like a knight of old. I am ready to believe in her.

*Dorian.* Then, why insult her in her absence?

*L'Estrange.* I never thought of insult. I was only desirous to know the key to her coldness, her apparent loneliness, her silence as to her past.

*Dorian* (*coldly*). I cannot help to satisfy your curiosity.

*L'Estrange.* It is not curiosity alone. But if we argue in this manner we shall end in a quarrel, and that would be beneath both you and me. Besides, I am due at Cardinal Roxano's. Good night, my friend; I will not wish you consoled, for consolation is only the harvest of feebleness, and you are strong.

[*Presses DORIAN's hand, and leaves the studio.*]

*Dorian* (*to himself*). Or the harvest of selfishness. He thinks of her already! To think of her is to love her.

(*To be concluded.*)



## About Yorkshire.

### I.—WHITBY AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

A GREY sea coming slowly in, in long white rollers that break on the sand; the great stretch of bay is ended by a point of cliff, its broken side telling how the sea has encroached on it, and how short a past or future have the tufts of grass niched in its hollows. More than one of these broken points projects out into the deep sand-fringed curve and breaks it into a succession of smaller bays, each with their stretch of tawny sand and foam; this is north-west of the river's mouth, for the Esk running inland divides Whitby in two: the east cliff crowned by its ruined Abbey, and the west cliff covered with modern houses with foreground of sands



*Whitby Harbour.*

and bathers and far-stretching pier. Standing on this west cliff we see the green heights opposite, with the brown ruined Abbey, and just below it the square tower of the old grey church. In front of the Abbey comes a low range of red-roofed buildings, and lower down, hanging on the side of the steep hill, is the old town of Whitby, with its mingling of red and slated roofs hemmed in between the busy harbour and the cliff.

Beyond the old church, built on a projecting spur, the cliff ends abruptly, going down straight till it projects in another spur on a level with the steep street that takes its way through the old town. Some way below this spur a wooden staircase, that literally hangs

in the air, leads to the east pier. At low tide one passes under this staircase to the Scar, a hard broad pavement of lias famed for the sea treasures to be found there. The cliff is higher here, and gorgeous in colour, opening now into dark caves, now projecting in glowing headlands; a tempting walk for sea-lovers, but full of danger, for the tide creeps up silently by small channels among the stones and rocks, and we heard that often a boat has to be put out to rescue unwary loiterers on the Scar cut off by the hungry sea—for no one could hope to climb the face of the cliff. Between the staircase in the air and an inner pier or bar across the harbour there is a sandy strand below the green hill-side with its sprinkling of red-topped cottages, and here at low tide the Whitby washer-women stretch clothes to dry.

Looking on to the harbour, the town, veiled in smoke, chiefly caused by herring-kippering, reaches for some distance; green hills show above the forest of masts in the inner harbour closed by the bridge; far away are the boundless moors which once made Whitby an almost inaccessible town scarcely to be reached except by sea.

It is very curious to think that although, as early as the fourteenth century, one hears of a herring fishery at Whitby, it was till a hundred and thirty years ago practically separated from the rest of England by the absence of roads. 'Till the year 1751 all the roads about Whitby lay in a state of nature, rough, rugged, and uneven; it was dangerous for a man on horseback to come into the town in the winter season—but more so for any loaded carriage then to approach the place . . . In 1759 a design was formed to join Whitby to the other parts of England by turn-piking the post road that led from thence over those great moors which lie to the southward thereof, so that passengers now ventured to pass over the moors without fear or danger, where no stranger before that time durst ever presume to come without a guide.' So Lionel Charlton, 'teacher of the mathematics,' writes a hundred years ago. It is perhaps a consequence of this long-continued isolation that Whitby and its inhabitants are still so primitive, and set such an unlimited value on the importance and beauty of their town and its surroundings. And they may be justly proud of the position of the town, built on each side of the deep valley through which the Esk runs swiftly to the sea, of the fine old Abbey which crowns the east cliff, and of the neighbouring country.

About the middle of the seventh century there dwelt in this region a Prince named Henerick and his virtuous wife Berewick. They took refuge from some outbreak at the court of Cerdic, king of the Britons, where Henerick was murdered. Before the birth of her second child, Berewick dreamed that she was seeking her husband,

and feeling weary sate down to rest. All at once she spied a light under her cloak, and drawing it aside she beheld there a luminous jewel which shone forth not only over the place she was in, but spread its beams over the whole island of Britain. She told her dream, and it was interpreted to relate to her coming infant. In due time a daughter was born to her, who was baptized Hilda. The child grew fair and saintly, and became superior of a convent at Hartlepool, where her life soon established her reputation for sanctity. In 658 either she or Oswy, king of Northumberland, secured this land, then called Streonshalh, in 'Saxon Tower on the Strand,' and built there a monastery for Benedictine monks and nuns in honour of St. Peter. Hilda and the infant princess Æthelfleda, entrusted to her care by King Oswy, removed here from Hartlepool with a company of nuns. Hilda's Abbey was built on the top of the lofty cliff at some distance from the sea, but the waves have little by little so encroached on the hard rock that now one side of the abbey is near the verge of the precipice and exposed to all the fury of the fierce gales of the North Sea. In its position Whitby Abbey carries out the saying,

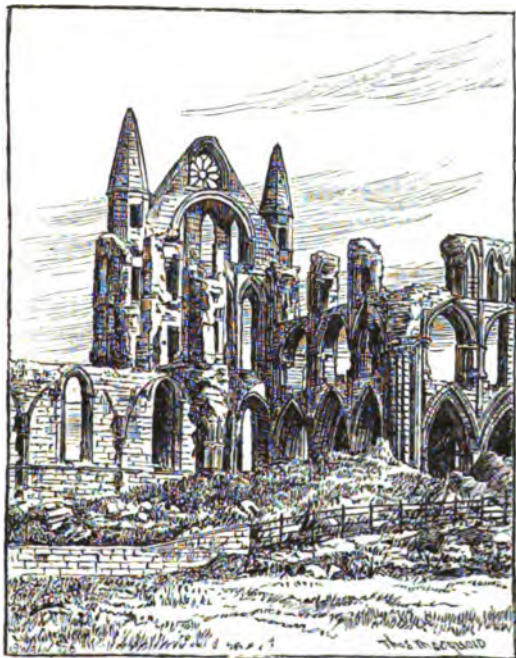
' Bernard loved the valley,  
And Benedict the hill ;'

so strangely does its exposed position contrast with the wooded nests of the Cistercians, Fountains, Rievaulx, Jervaux, &c.

But when they took possession of their new dwellings the nuns and their Abbess were sorely plagued ; for they found that the rocks were infested by snakes, and that these loathsome reptiles were perpetually crawling around and about their steps. Hilda was greatly troubled, but she prayed that the snakes might be made to crawl down the rocks never to return to the Abbey. Her prayer was granted, and the snakes fell on their heads on the rocks and their bodies were turned into stones which were supposed to be the ammonites so frequently imbedded in the cliffs, and hence called St. Hilda's stones.

The Abbey seems at once to have become famous. The saintly reputation of its foundress spread all over the land like the light of her mother's jewel, and St. Peter's Abbey, as it was then called, was chosen as the place for the famous synod which settled the dispute between the Culdees, who held thereon the teaching of St. John and the Eastern Church, and were represented by Bishop Colman and others ; and the disciples of St. Augustine, the apostle of the Southern Saxons, who in the persons of Agilbert and St. Wilfrid of Ripon enforced the teaching of Rome and of St. Peter. Oswy, king of Northumberland, and the Abbess

Hilda held with the Culdees. Finally, Wilfrid's eloquence prevailed; the present law of observance was established, and the monastery was resorted to by all illustrious persons, saintly, highly gifted, and royal. Streonshalh itself, however, remained unknown for many centuries—it is not named in *Domesday Book*, though Egton and some neighbouring villages are therein mentioned. Hilda's sanctity attested itself by other miracles besides the petrified snakes; sea-fowl in full flight paused and drooped when they reached the Abbey, and fell to the ground in attempt-



*Whitby Abbey.*

ing to fly over it. In '*Marmion*' this is spoken of, and Drayton says—

'Over this attractive earth there may no wild goose fly,  
But presently they fall from off their wings to earth;  
If this no wonder be, where is there wonder found?  
Thereat may ye more behold  
Snakes that in their natural gyves are up together rolled.'

Cædmon, the first British poet, is said to have been inspired with his gift within the Abbey walls, and for more than two hundred years all was prosperous. Then the fierce Vikings—Hubba and his companions—sailed across the sea; they had heard of the fame of the Abbey. They landed at the mouth of

the Esk, and, scaling the rocks, burned the Abbey—probably a wooden building—plundered it, and destroyed all living souls. For two hundred years more the place lay ruined, and the name of Streonshalh was forgotten. The land near the Abbey was called first Presteby, or the house of priests, and then Whitby, for which more than one derivation is given. After the Conquest the Abbey was rebuilt by Reinfred, who had been one of William the Conqueror's soldiers, but who, having become a monk, desired to restore the devastated ruins to the worship and glory of God; but this second dedication seems only to have been for monks, and the new Abbey was called St. Hilda's. The Abbots' book tells how great troubles seem to have come upon the brethren; pirates from the sea and robbers from the land attacked them, plundering the Abbey, and even carrying some of the monks into captivity. But in the beginning of the twelfth century peace appears to have been restored, and in the time of the fourth Abbot Richard, about the middle of the century, the buildings were greatly enlarged and beautified. On December 14, 1539, the last Abbot, Henry de Vall, and his eighteen monks resigned their monastery to Henry VIII. Then the building was stripped of everything that could be turned into money, and left for the wind to work its will on. The monastery has perished, but a considerable part of the church still remains, and shows how splendid it must have been. The rich brown of the stone makes it yet more picturesque, and the views framed in by its ruined windows are very striking. Near it is a gloomy haunted-looking house called Whitby Hall, said to have been built of the stones of the Abbey.

The view from this interesting old ruin is very grand. The cliff on which it stands is 250 feet high, and goes down almost perpendicularly to the scar below, while right and left the coast stretches away in a series of bold headlands or nabs, rich in geological wonders. At low water one sees that the Scar—as the flat slabs of lias are called—is not always flat; farther out are cruel and dangerous-looking rocks, and on one of these brown monsters the ship bearing the Abbey bells—which were, says Charlton, 'very noble and antique'—is supposed to have foundered. The bells were on their way to London, but no tidings came of their arrival; and sometimes, when the gale is tearing so fiercely round the Nab that no fishing-boat dares leave the harbour, old fishermen have heard, from beneath the waves, the sound of the drowned bells.

Turning away from the sea, the moors stretch out as far as we can see, at first in a flat range, a continuance of the Abbey plain; then the country is varied with dark hills, sometimes wooded, but oftener purple and brown with heather, as the moor stretches

on to Fylingdales, which, with all the intervening country under the name of Whitby Strand, belonged to the Abbot of St. Hilda's.

A little way down is the parish church, nestling against the cliff; this church is said to be older than the Abbey, but it is so encrusted with galleries, and defaced by monuments, whitewash, and padded pews, that one considers it more as a curiosity than as a church. Cholmley's gallery cuts off the chancel, and is supported by twisted pillars with a row of very fat cherubim as entablature; in front of it the clock keeps up a ghastly tick-tack. The chancel floored over to reach the aforesaid gallery makes a kind of tunnel to the altar. The pews are wonderful, lined with green and red baize in all stages, some fresh, some in decay, while the brass nails that stud them may be counted by thousands; but faded and worm-eaten though they be, the pews are carefully covered up with old cloths between Sunday and Sunday. Windows and skylights break out in unexpected places, wherever the wall is not covered with tablets, or with tablet frames with texts painted in them; yet in corners, especially on the south walls, one comes on a splayed Norman window or a bit of early moulding. It is evident from Charlton's account that the church was in much the same state in his time.

The view from the churchyard is very interesting, and more varied than that from the Abbey, for it overlooks the meeting of the river with the sea far below. From it we come down the long flight of straggling steps 'worn by the feet of generations,' steps which seem to hang in air between the church and the town below, and remind us of Mont St. Michel; only here, at every landing-place, is a bench where one can rest and gaze down on the busy harbour or the broad North Sea. These are the steps that Sylvia Robson climbed on the day she made acquaintance with the specksioneer over his dead comrade's grave. The touching idyllic book, 'Sylvia's Lovers,' seems to give an added charm to Whitby; as we come down the long street which leads through this old part of the town and the bridge across the Esk, we find ourselves constantly talking of Sylvia. Just here, at the shop near the bridge, she bought that red duffel cloak in defiance of Philip's warning; here, too, she saw the fatal struggle between the newly landed sailors, eager to meet their wives and sweethearts, and the pressgang waiting to seize them. The hardihood and daring of the Whitby men were well known, and men from the crews of the whaling vessels were eagerly sought after in the terrible days when men were made to fight for their country against their will. Charlton says, 'The genius of the inhabitants of Whitby has a most surprising turn for the sea; children as soon as they are capable

of action endeavour to get upon the water, to handle an oar, to manage the sails of a boat and to steer. Hence it comes to pass that, when they are sent to sea at the age of thirteen or fourteen, they are more than half sailors.'

These Whitby men are fine-looking fellows, highly picturesque in their yellow oilskin head-coverings and leggings, as well as in their blue jerseys; the women, too, have a coarse seafaring aspect, and one can imagine how flowerlike the beauty of Sylvia Robson must have seemed compared with the hard-featured lasses one now sees on the Staithes. The tale on which Mrs. Gaskell founded her 'Sylvia's Lovers' was true so far as regarded the execution of Sylvia's father, but doubtless many tragedies connected with the pressgang have been enacted on the quays of the busy little town; we heard one the truth of which was vouched for, and which happened within the memory of people now living.

In one of the glens running up from the sea between Whithy and Robinhood's Bay there lived a farmer and his wife and their two daughters. These two sisters, both pretty and virtuous maidens, were beloved by two brothers engaged in the Greenland fishery; they had 'fancied' one another before the last voyage, but the young men had not then ventured to speak, for the farmer was a well-to-do man, and not likely to give his daughters in marriage without being sure of their future. Now both brothers had returned from a successful voyage; they had shown great bravery, and had each been appointed to the command of a vessel by the shipowner in whose ships they had served. On the first evening after their arrival they went off joyfully to the farm in the gully (as these grassed clefts leading to the sea are called). On their way, a short distance from the town, they met a girl named Polly, and stopped to speak a few words to her.

'Ye'll turn wi' me, Bill,' she said to the youngest; 'tis a weary while sin' Ah've seed you.'

Bill coloured up, his heart was full of his errand of love; in the old days when he laughed and joked with Polly he had never been seriously in earnest, but then he had never seen Hester Mossburn.

'Nay, Polly,' he said kindly, for the lad's heart was so brimming over with love that it just poured out of him. 'Ah cannot gan wi' you, Ah've other fish to fry.'

Polly was a tall, strongly-built lass, rough-haired and freckle-skinned, like most Whitby girls. She fixed her pale blue eyes keenly on the young sailor.

'Ista thinking on Hester Mossburn?' she said scornfully. 'She's noane for you, Bill.'

‘Wheesht, lass,’ said the brother, whose name was Peter ‘Bill’s all right, an’ knows his way; he and Hester agree like bells, they want nothing but hanging, an’ mebbe we’ll fix thatter t’neet.’

He gave a sly wink, but Polly wrenched her arm away from the grasp he had laid on it.

‘Curse her!’ she said passionately; ‘curse the pair on ’em!’ and she fled away like the wind.

‘Curses come home to roost, mah lass,’ said Peter, but both the lads felt that this meeting had dashed their joy.

When they reached the gully and began to climb upwards to the farm—for they had come along beside the strand—the dogs set up such a notice of arrival that both Hester and her sister Dorothy came to the door to see who the visitors might be; and, in the joy of meeting after such long absence, restraint was forgotten, words were said, and vows were exchanged—and kisses too—and the two couples walked in hand in hand and made their confession to Dame Mossburn. Soon came in the farmer, and when he heard how matters stood he gave his consent heartily. Then Bill and Peter both began to press that a speedy day might be named for the double marriage. It was true that they should not go on another voyage till next season, but why should they not be made happy as soon as might be? The father took their side; the girls made faint objection, and before they parted the tender whispers of their lovers as they all sate in the firelight round the hearth prevailed, and a day not far off was fixed for the wedding. It was growing late, and the farmer, after sundry yawns, told the lovers that they would have a lonesome walk to Whitby. Then first Peter and Dorothy stole out to take a fond farewell outside the house. Dorothy lingered long, and her mother, after some bridling and shaking of her head, rose up to fetch her in, when suddenly the door was flung open and Dorothy, pale as ashes, rushed into the kitchen shrieking with terror.

‘I’ pressgang!’ she screamed, ‘they’ve gotten Peter fast; nob-but ye’re a man, Bill, ye’ll save t’ lad fra’ them.’

Her passionate cry, and their own indignation, robbed the farmer and Bill of their judgment. Both rushed out to rescue the sailor, but the farmer was seized and overpowered, while Bill was dragged off to take his place beside his mate in a boat lying in the creek.

In the silence that followed, the two young women crept out to see what had happened, but they only found their father lying speechless with a broken head, and utterly ignorant of the fate of their lovers.

Months went by; the country was rife with rumours of glorious



victories, but to Hester and Dorothy they only meant a chance of death for their absent lovers; for might they not have been in the very thick of one or other of these great sea-fights?

So they grew sadder and paler, and at last both put on mourning clothes for their loved ones.

Polly heard of this, and she mocked openly. One day, at a fish auction on the Staithes, she boasted that if a lad broke faith with her she knew how to punish him. 'Ye can ask Hester Mossburn,' she said.

She was startled by the sudden silence that fell on the noisy group, just now full of laughter and coarse jokes.

Then the oldest fisherman, near whom she stood, gripped her arm.

'Ista false, Polly?' he said. 'Ah wud not hev thowt sic a steeaney-heart lived amongst us;' and he flung her from him with violence. The man against whom the push sent her flung her away as if she were plague-stricken. At this Polly gathered herself with an angry scowl, but as she met the stony glances of the eyes all fixed on her—glances that to her guilty soul seemed to promise a speedy vengeance for her treason—she fled away, and from that day she never showed her face on the Staithes. But the story spread like wild-fire over the moor and town into the gullies. Polly's landlady turned her out of doors, and not a soul would give shelter or employment to the girl who had betrayed Whitby sailors to their natural enemies.

At last shame and privation and exposure took away her reason, and crazy Polly, as she was called, wandered over the moor, telling wayfarers that she was waiting for her lover.

Hester and Dorothy waited on, rejecting all offers of marriage though four years had gone by, and not one word had reached them from their lovers.

And then their constancy was rewarded. One day Bill and Peter stood before them safe and sound, though both had been wounded in their service on board a man-of-war; and it is to be presumed they lived happily ever after, as all true lovers should do.

One lingers on Whitby Bridge; the view of the harbour and its shipping is so quaint with the wooden galleries and stairs many-coloured in the sunlight. Across the bridge is the broad quay full of life of the most primitive kind; tall stalwart fishermen, red-bearded like their Danish forefathers—though some are dark with long eyes that gleam like those of a Breton—they sit chatting on the rail of the quay till a bell sounds from the Staithes, the crowded flagged corner west of the bridge. A great heap of fish has been brought from the boats moored along the quay, and the auctioneer is ready to put them up for sale. Hard-

featured women, with shawls over their heads and tucked-up skirts, carry the fish in baskets, placed on their head, up the slippery wooden steps that lead from the boats to the quay. They rarely raise a hand to steady their baskets as they walk, either to the flagstones where the auctioneer is standing, or to a group farther on waiting with barrels of salt to strew over the shining loads they carry.

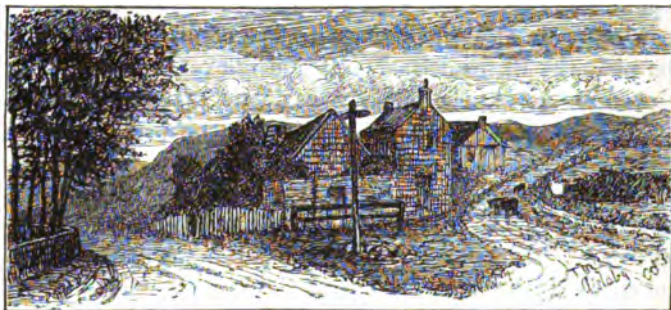
The sun was shining when we reached this scene, and the river was full of boats from Cornwall, Scotland, and elsewhere, their open hatchways making a dazzling display of colour on the heaps of fish glistening and shimmering like prism-tinted silver, while on the other side of us the quaint humour exchanged between the buyers and the auctioneer was most amusing. We saw a huge cod-fish sold for half-a-crown, and a hundred of herrings went for a few pence. This walk beside the quay leads us to the West Pier, stretching far into the sea; one gets a real idea of the sea at its extreme end even when it is not very rough weather. We saw one gale at Whitby when no one could venture to the end of the pier, the waves dashed so furiously over it—clouds of spray were even flung over the lighthouses at its extreme end; it seems marvellous that either piers or lighthouses can withstand the force of the furious sea. The Greenland trade which so enriched Whitby, and to which its principal families owe their wealth, seems only to have begun in the middle of last century. In 1753 two ships sailed from Whitby for Greenland, but the war with France and Spain checked the whale fishery for a time; in 1767 it was resumed, and until 1838 it seems to have flourished. In rather more than fifty years the Whitby ships brought home 3,200 whales, besides a vast amount of whale fins. At present the herring fishery in July, August, and September is a great feature of Whitby, and many of its inhabitants are shipowners. The ammonites already mentioned and other fossils are found in the rocks near, and the *Ichthyosaurus*, *Plesiosaurus*, and *Teleosaurus* have all been found in its neighbourhood. There is also a remarkable basaltic dyke seventy feet in width, to be traced by geologists about seventy miles in a north-westerly direction.

But the neighbourhood of Whitby teems with object of more general interest than the basaltic dyke. The walks near at hand are so charming, that it is difficult to choose among them.

We drove one day to Rigg's Mill, a disused mill buried in a hollow, surrounded on one side by a jungle of tangled vegetation, and on the other by the river, which has hollowed out fantastic caves in the banks so that the tree roots on the higher side hang in air. This place is almost weird in its interest. Then crossing the

river, we came home by Ruswarp, a pretty inland village beside the Esk. But the most delightful surroundings of Whitby are the moors towards Cleveland, which can be easily reached by rail, Egton Bridge, and Glaisdale. There seems to be an enhanced enjoyment in breathing moorland air near the sea; it is almost life-giving. The springy feel of the heather underfoot gives a sparkle and animation that make fatigue impossible, and sets the spirits dancing; and when from these moors one can gaze one's fill at the sea, the conjunction makes a sort of paradise. Nearer than either Egton or Glaisdale are Aislaby and Sleights.

The approach to Aislaby is charming; a rick-yard beside the road stands out vividly against the dark background of Blackbrow, and just beyond is a screen of trees with purple distance showing through. Aislaby itself is a long straggling village; on the left is the valley of the Esk, from which the moor rises. At the end of the village we come to a gate, and from this point we get a far-



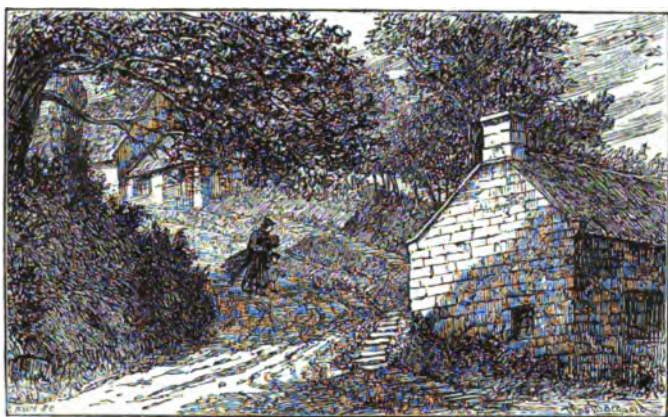
*Village of Aislaby, near Whitby.*

reaching view over the moors of Egton, Grosmont, and the villages near them. One of us walked on about half a mile to an old quarry, and from the top of this got a magnificent view of the country.

We went to Sleights by train, and found the uphill climb from the station very steep and not specially interesting, and then all at once the broad road, as if tired of going straight uphill, flings out a spacious curve, and shows little red cottages set up by twos and threes, and wholly unlike one another, clinging to each side of the road. Some have gardens in front, some only a chicken- or pig-yard; at the end is the church, and opposite it a farmhouse, and then behind them rises the broad moor. The road sweeps round again, and we almost circle huge Blackbrow on the right; on the left is a hedge, and from this the ground goes down steeply, showing that we are on the side of the hill. Deep down in the green valley a pretty little village nestles among the trees. We climb a little higher, and the moor spreads out before us vast and sombre.

Behind us is Sleights sleeping peacefully in the curve of the broad yellow road; grass-grown up here as if seldom trodden; away across the green valley are the cliffs of Whitby, and the ruins of St. Hilda's Abbey standing out against the evening sky; beyond, the grey North Sea. From Sleights the train took us to Egton Bridge, where we found ourselves again beside the Esk; no longer the tranquil brown stream we had seen a week ago at Ruswarp, but fretted and foaming over stones as the water from the hills, brimmed by the floods of rain, rushed down little gorges and glens, and joined it. Egton Bridge was quite the loveliest little village we had seen in our wanderings.

At the inn a pretty-looking girl said they could not lodge strangers, but that at a house 'across t' water' we could get rooms. We went down the inn garden, and there was the river rushing



*Village of Egton Bridge.*

along and eddying in yellow foam over a row of sunken stepping-stones, after which it curved round on either side under the shade of drooping trees; sunshine stole down here and there through the trees, and from the little plank bridge the subdued green light made the scene still more lovely. We crossed the stream, and found ourselves on a green island, and facing us the pleasant-looking house we had come to seek; here was another row of stepping-stones, but, alas! we could not cross: the wide brown river was dashing furiously over them, and they were all deep under water. There was nothing for it but to go back; still, we could not regret having seen the Esk with its war-paint on. At the rate at which it was travelling, it would carry all obstacles swiftly to the sea; every dry branch within reach was snapped off and borne along as if it had been a twig, and the yellow foam and sullen roar made its fury

seem lion-like. Egton Bridge is a place to linger in ; it has nooks and corners full of pictures besides those on the Esk, and it is surrounded by the grandest moors in this part of Yorkshire ; on one side is Egton Low Moor and on the other Egton High Moor, and the country close round the village is well wooded with picturesque farmsteads nestling among the trees ; here and there are haystacks making a gilding to the rural pictures. The church at Egton, about a mile away, is old and interesting ; the view from the churchyard is very fine ; the Esk runs rapidly through the village, and we heard that trout were still found in it, although salmon, for which Egton was once famous, exist no longer ; on every side views over the moors are delightful and most varied. From Egton Bridge to Glaisdale is a short walk, or a few minutes by rail : either way, we go through Arncliffe Woods. Much of the foot-path is a kind of causeway up and down, broken and uneven, leading through the trees on to the steep heights above the river, which rushes through its rocky banks. Little streams, overhung with trees, and making tiny cascades over stones, cross our path and form lovely glens, recalling the valleys of the Lynns in North Devon. Huge blocks of rock lie on either side of our path among the thick trees ; they offer tempting mossy seats, but the woods to-day are too wet for thorough enjoyment, and when we try to scramble after ferns we sink into the soft oozy bank. Presently we come to some still bigger rocks, and out of one of them has grown a great oak-tree ; the changing tints make the woods overhead like Aladdin's cave, for the trees are chiefly beech ; but in the spring it must be fairy-land here, for one can see that the place will be carpeted with wild flowers, and we heard that the Nab, the lofty hill at the end of the wood, is literally covered with primroses in April. We climbed up the Nab, and felt well rewarded when we got to the top, for it is at the end of a narrow ridge of hills, and we looked right down into Glaisdale ; behind us were the valleys of the Esk and the beautiful woods we had come through ; beyond the village of Glaisdale and the sadly disfiguring iron-works, hidden from view till the top of the Nab is reached, is the splendid moor, and here is another primitive village.

We came down the Nab and went into the inn, and found that it had clean, comfortable-looking rooms ; then we went down the hill till we reached the railway arch beside the river, and found our way across a frail plank bridge to the famous 'Beggar's Bridge,' which spans the Esk in one arch raised high above the water. It is so embowered in trees that we had to go some way along the muddy bank to get a good view of it. It is singularly light and graceful,

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*The Beggar's Bridge.*





and does credit to the lover who built it in memory of his own disappointment. A Yorkshire poetess tells us that—

‘The dalesmen say  
That their light archway  
Is due to an Egton man,  
Whose love was tried  
By a whelming tide,’ &c.

The ‘Egton man’ loved a Glaisdale maiden, and was in the habit of visiting his mistress by fording the river just where the bridge now stands. He was very poor, and determined to go forth into the world and carve out for himself a livelihood. He had promised to go and say farewell to his beloved on the eve of his departure. Twice he tried to swim across to the opposite bank, but the rough whirling eddy still swept him ashore. At last he gave up the attempt and climbed the hill-side, and there, gazing on the light in his beloved’s window, he vowed to St. Hilda that no other lover should be thwarted as he had been; if he returned home wealthy enough to claim his bride, he would build a bridge on this very spot. The poem adds,—

‘The rover came back from a far distant land,  
And he claimed of the maiden her long-promised hand;  
But he built, ere he won her, the bridge of his vow,  
And the lovers of Egton pass over it now.’

The scenery of these woods on one side, and those of Limber Hill on the other, tempted us to wish we had weeks to spend here. We had a pleasant walk from Egton Bridge to Grosmont, now full of smelting-works, but we could not find any remains of the old priory built here at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

(*To be continued.*)

## The Admiral's Ward.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER.

### CHAPTER I.

THE morning tide of business some dozen years ago was at its fullest flow in the extensive premises of Messrs. Thurston and Trent, solicitors, Sydenham Chambers, E.C.

Rows of clerks on the ground-floor offices were rapidly covering sheets of paper with dreary crowds of monotonous words— or, worse, long columns of appalling figures. Others came to and fro, and spoke frequent messages into tubes up and down, for the 'well-known firm' occupied several stories of the building.

Above, in the first floor, were the private rooms of the partners— solemn chambers, where law assumed its stateliest aspect, and visitors instinctively perceived the courtliness of Chancery.

In another quarter of an hour luncheon-time would bring a temporary lull; meantime, all worked at full steam.

Upstairs Mr. Trent had been in consultation with Mr. Thurston and one of the chief clerks respecting some difficult points in a heavy Chancery suit.

Mr. Trent, a slight spare man, with keen dark eyes, hair just touched with grey, and a countenance somewhat worn and watchful, had turned his chair a little from the knee-hole table loaded with papers before which he sat, to look at his partner who stood in front of the empty grate.

Mr. Thurston was the type of a high-class man of business. His Oxford grey morning coat and nether garments had come from the hands of an artist, his snowy linen was the 'outward and visible sign' of exalted respectability, and his pale cream-coloured summer waistcoat perfection itself in cut and getting up. His neat black tie was surmounted by a face, somewhat old-fashioned in aspect (there *are* old-fashioned faces), but by no means unpleasing.

A much older man than his partner, his hair was yet quite free from silver threads, and his eyes could look all men clearly in the face, although they needed the help of the small unobtrusive eye-glass with which he habitually played while discussing knotty points.

The third in the group was a young man of perhaps six-and-

twenty; he might be more from his air of cool self-possession. Taller than either of his employers' and remarkably well proportioned, he had that indefinable air of distinction which they lacked—abundant wavy hair, called by friends golden, by detractors red, eyes of blue grey, and lips rather soft and full perhaps, yet which could smile sweetly, frankly, intelligently, even when a glimpse of something hard might be caught in the eyes. His clothes were well cut and carefully put on, and altogether he was a figure which could not be unnoticed, as he stood at the other side of Mr. Trent's table holding the back of a chair with his long, shapely hand.

'Well, then, that is the line we shall adopt,' said Mr. Thurston in conclusion, drawing the fine black cord by which his eye-glass was suspended, through his fingers; 'and now I think I shall take my biscuit and sherry.'

'It is almost one o'clock,' observed Mr. Trent. 'I have not finished half my letters, and I have an appointment at two about that compromise of Thompson's.'

'Nevertheless,' said the young clerk, coming a step forward, 'I am going to ask for a few minutes of your time on my own account.'

'Certainly,' said Mr. Thurston.

'By all means,' said Mr. Trent.

'I see in this day's "Times,"' continued the young man, taking up the paper and turning it rapidly over, 'that a cousin of mine has been killed when hunting. Here is the paragraph;' and doubling down the paper at the passage he had found, he handed it to Mr. Thurston, who, raising his glass, read aloud in a well-trained voice and with correct emphasis as follows:—

'The accident, reported in our impression of yesterday, to Mr. Hugh Piers of Pierslynn, while hunting with the Saltshire hounds, has, we regret to say, terminated fatally. The unfortunate gentleman breathed his last yesterday evening in the cottage where he had been carried from the field. His death will cast a gloom over a large circle with whom he was deservedly popular, both as an excellent landlord and a thorough sportsman. Mr. Piers was unmarried, and we understand his estates devolve on a distant cousin.'

'Ah—um—I think we have heard of this relative,' said Mr. Thurston.

'It affects you, Reginald?' asked Mr. Trent.

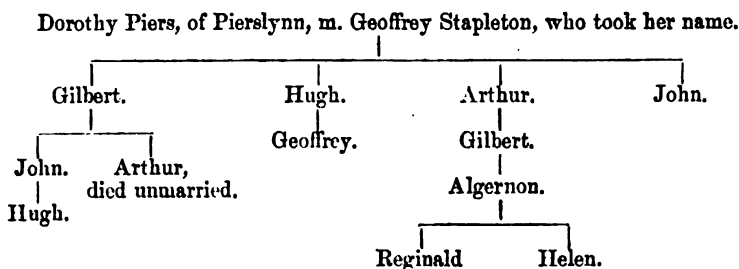
'Considerably,' he returned with a quick, irrepressible, exulting laugh; 'inasmuch as I am now Piers of Pierslynn.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed Mr. Thurston

'You are sure you can prove your title?' said Mr. Trent.

'Certain,' returned Piers. 'I am well up in the ramifications of my family; and though I never dreamed of succeeding to the estate—for this poor fellow was little more than thirty-nine, in rude health, likely to marry and have no end of sons and daughters—I have been always aware I was his next of kin. If you will glance at this'—drawing a paper from his pocket—'it will show you how I stand.'

He unfolded the paper as he spoke, and placed it before Mr. Trent. It was inscribed thus:—



'Here you see,' he continued, 'is our common ancestor Geoffrey Stapleton Piers. He had four sons. The man just killed was the grandson of the eldest. I am the third in descent from Arthur. Mrs. Trent is the great-granddaughter of John.'

'That seems quite clear,' said Mr. Thurston, following his young friend's explanation with urbane attention and observant eye-glass.

'Yes,' added Mr. Trent. 'But what about this Geoffrey, son of Hugh? Had he no family?'

'No. Geoffrey died unmarried; in fact, as is usual, only the pauperised branches of our family increased and multiplied.'

'Well, my young friend,' said Mr. Thurston with solemn kindness, 'accept my best congratulations and good wishes.'

'It will be a great change for you, if your claim proves valid,' remarked his partner gravely.

'Very great,' returned Piers. 'From genteel pauperism to fortune and position! I never can be grateful enough to that brother-in-law of mine for having let me have the run of his stables occasionally, or I should be an unworthy inheritor of Pierslynn, and successor to such a mighty hunter as the late owner.' The young man's face grew radiant and his eyes evidently saw distant visions, as imagination depicted a fascinating array of pleasures and privilege awaiting the owner of a fine estate.

'What is the rent-roll?' asked Mr. Trent, turning to his table and drawing his writing-book to him.

'I do not exactly know—not under five thousand a year, I fancy,' returned Piers.

'I hope it is unencumbered,' said Mr. Thurston, advancing from the hearth-rug in the direction of the door; 'a bachelor of sporting proclivities is only too apt to outrun his means.'

'Not Hugh Piers!' exclaimed his successor. 'He was a shrewd fellow, by all accounts, who never let pleasure cost him too much.'

'I rather imagine, my young friend, you have been taking stock of your possible inheritance,' said Mr. Thurston, fingering his eye-glass, with a smile of superiority; 'although you say you never anticipated this sudden turn of fortune's wheel.'

'I assure you I did not; only, rumours *will* get afloat,' replied Piers.

'Well, well, you have my best wishes; and, I may add, the law has lost a smart disciple;' which polite and proper sentence brought Mr. Thurston to the door. Before he had touched the handle, however, it was opened rather abruptly—a clerk entered, and, with a deferential 'I beg your pardon' to the respected principal, went straight to Mr. Trent's table and laid a card before him, saying, 'Wishes to see you, sir.'

'Show him up,' returned Mr. Trent; adding, as the clerk went out, 'it is the Admiral—Admiral Desbarres. I wonder what has brought him up to town again. Reginald! I have no time now; but dine with us to-day, and we will talk matters over. Mrs. Trent will be very glad to see you.'

'I will just shake hands with the excellent Admiral before I leave you,' said Mr. Thurston, pausing.

'And I——' began Piers; when he was interrupted by the entrance of an old gentleman, above middle height, with slightly stooped shoulders, iron-grey hair, and whiskers nearly white; a thoughtful, almost sad expression softened his handsome, embrowned face, and full, dark, wistful eyes.

'Hope I see you well, sir?' said Mr. Thurston, with an air of deference.

'This is an unexpected pleasure, Admiral,' said Mr. Trent, rising to receive him. 'I hope all's well with you?'

'With me, yes,' returned the Admiral, shaking hands with him; 'but I have come on a sad errand. Is not this gentleman Mr. Piers?—Mr. Reginald Piers,' he added, arresting the young man's movement to leave the room.

'Yes,' replied Mr. Trent, as Piers paused and bowed.

'I have had the pleasure of meeting you, some time ago, at Mr.

Fielden's?—the Rev. Frederic Fielden's,' continued the Admiral in a pleasant, deliberate voice, and with much grave courtesy.

'I remember perfectly having been presented to you at Ched-dington, nearly three years ago; but I hardly thought you would remember me.'

'I seldom forget,' said the Admiral. 'I regret I have to tell you that our mutual friend, Mr. Fielden, died about a week ago. It is this that has brought me up to town on my way to Dresden, where he and his family have been residing for some time. You are aware that my ward, Laura Piers, who is some distant relation of yours, I believe, always lived with her Uncle Fielden? Poor fellow! His death has been very sudden. He was considered a *malade imaginaire*, but he has proved the reality of his pretensions. His niece, daughter, and a young son are left sadly desolate.'

'I am very sorry to hear this,' replied Reginald, with an air of much concern. 'It will be a blow in every way to Dick, the eldest son, who was my chum in former days.'

'He is in a banking house in Calcutta, is he not?' asked the Admiral.

'He is, and doing very well, I believe.'

'This is the second sudden death we have heard of this morning,' said Mr. Thurston gravely. 'It is remarkable and startling. I will leave you with my colleague and wish you good day, Admiral Desbarres.' He left the room.

'Good morning,' said the Admiral, politely dismissing Reginald Piers, who bowed himself out, and, drawing forward the skirts of his loose-fitting dark frock-coat, the Admiral sat down opposite his confidential man of business, and then there was a pause. The Admiral was not to be hurried.

At length Mr. Trent remarked mildly, 'I am quite at your service; but I have an appointment at two.'

'I will not trespass long on your time,' said the Admiral in his gentle voice, which one could hardly fancy shouting orders through a speaking-trumpet; 'but I am somewhat puzzled how to act under the present circumstances.'

'How do you mean, my dear sir?'

'I mean, how shall I best fulfil the serious responsibilities which have devolved upon me through the death of this poor gentleman?'

'Of Mr. Fielden? I do not see what responsibilities have devolved upon you through his death.'

'They are very distinct to me. For years Mr. Fielden's kind care of my ward provided her with a happy home, and relieved

me of all anxiety on her account. Now, he is summoned by the Great Master, and the boy and girl who were as brother and sister to Laura are left, I fear, unprovided for. How can I separate them, and leave these helpless young creatures to battle with life as best they can ?'

'Your ward has, I presume, some fortune of her own ?'

'An officer's daughter is seldom well dowered—of course, it is clearly my duty to care for *her* ; but the others—I must help them, though I can scarce devise the means.'

'But, my dear sir, this is benevolence run riot. The children of the late Mr. Fielden have no shadow of claim upon you, &c. &c. ;' and Mr. Trent went on to discourse very logically on this theme.

The Admiral heard him with an unmoved countenance, while he drew a large note-book from his pocket, and turned over its contents slowly. 'I see,' he resumed, selecting a slip of paper covered with clear, carefully neat writing and figures, 'by this memo. of my resources, I see there is a sum of two thousand five hundred pounds which only pays three and a half per cent. I should like to get higher interest, say five or five and a half.'

'Certainly you might, Admiral Desbarres ; but, if you remember, when we invested that amount for you, you said you only cared for a fair and safe income, and that you would run no risk.'

'True ; but circumstances have changed. I heard a short time back of an undertaking in Hungary, a scheme to connect some towns—the names of which I cannot recall—by means of a canal for which the nephew of a friend of mine was organising a company. He assures me that money invested in this undertaking would yield a return of eight per cent. to the original stockholders.'

Mr. Trent shook his head with utter, unmistakable disapprobation. 'No, no, my dear sir, you must touch nothing of the kind. They would probably give you eight per cent. for eighteen months or thereabouts—that is, they would give you about two hundred pounds for your two thousand five hundred, and that is all you would ever see of the investment. No ! if you *must* have higher interest, we will look out for you ; but remember there is scarcely anything safe over five per cent.'

'It is a small provision,' said the Admiral thoughtfully, 'and it is evident the poor children are almost destitute. Laura writes'—He unfolded a letter, and read as follows:—'"I wish you could come to us, dearest guardian ; I feel quite bewildered, no one knows what to do, poor Winnie is stupefied with grief. We have only twenty-five marks and a few pfennige in the house, and it seems as if there was no more money anywhere. Where did my dear uncle keep his money ? Winnie thinks you may know. Pray



forgive me if I ask too much, but we do not seem to have a friend on earth except yourself." There can be but one answer to that appeal,' continued the Admiral. 'I am now on my way to Dresden; but before quitting England I wish to leave matters in train to increase my income.'

'I shall of course do my best to carry out your instructions; but I must entreat you not to take a load on your back which you may not be able to carry—at least, without due reflection.'

'I have reflected,' said the Admiral, 'and it is strongly borne in upon me that I ought to be the protector of these poor, helpless orphans, at least till they can help themselves. As I am bound to reside in the home my invalid sister has made for me, I must seek some safe shelter for the bereaved young creatures.'

'But these young Fieldens have surely some relatives who will befriend them, or some funds of which your correspondent is ignorant?' said Mr. Trent.

'I shall endeavour to ascertain the first: of the last, from my knowledge of the deceased, I have little hope.'

'How old are these young people?'

'My ward Laura Piers is nineteen or twenty, her cousin Wini-frid must be seventeen or eighteen, and the boy Herbert I should say is thirteen.'

'A very serious charge to any man—young people at these ages! Pray be cautious, my dear sir; be cautious!'

'I shall be prudent. Believe me, I am no enthusiast; but there is a voice within the heart which must not be disobeyed!'

Mr. Trent shook his head in token of disbelief in any voice which counselled quixotic generosity.

'Will you allow me to write a letter in your quiet room, as I have a good deal to do before I start this evening?'

'With pleasure,' returned the solicitor, placing a chair before a spare writing-table and opening a blotting-book.

The Admiral at once sat down, and, taking a silver holder which contained both pen and pencil from his note-book, wrote long and deliberately with frequent pauses. Mr. Trent had finished five or six brief but important letters before the Admiral had enclosed his in its envelope and directed it to Mrs. Crewe, 13 Leamington Road, Westbourne Park.

Meantime Reginald Piers rapidly descended the stairs and entered the inner office occupied by himself and two other principal clerks, where he found only one of them, his especial friend West, a quiet, shy, gentlemanlike young man, who looked upon Piers as 'no end of a swell,' and was favoured by him in consequence.

'Well, old fellow, I have great news for you!' cried Piers, slapping him on the shoulder. 'I am about to bid farewell to courts—at least of law, to suits, six-and-eightpenny letters, and your excellent company. I am going to be a "fine young English gentleman who lives on his estate!" Look here!'—showing him the 'Times'—'read and wonder!' The astounded listener took the newspaper and skimmed the paragraph pointed out.

'And do you mean to say you are this man's heir?' he exclaimed incredulously; for, to do Reginald justice, he always had too much *savoir-faire* to talk of wealthy or exalted relatives.

'Yes, I do! Look here!' He spread out the genealogical table, and pointed triumphantly to his own position as undoubted heir. 'What do you say to that, my boy?—a fine old ancestral place, five thousand a year at the very least, a good round sum of ready money—this cousin of mine was a saving man—a well-filled stable and well-kept preserves. Why, it is like a bit of magic! and, between ourselves, I never was so hard up as at the present moment. I protest, the last two nights I have lost no end of sleep, thinking of a bill that will come to maturity next week, and wondering where the deuce I should find funds to meet it. I tell you what it is, West—I should like to dance a hornpipe on your desk, if it were not too undignified!'

'I'm sure I am truly delighted to hear of your good fortune!' exclaimed West cordially.

'Thank you, West; I believe you are! and I hope to see you at Pierslynn, where I will teach you to "cross-country," old fellow!'

'I am afraid I am too old to learn,' returned West, laughing good-humouredly.

'By Jove! it is a special providence that I know how myself!' cried Reginald; 'I never had cash enough to keep even a donkey.'

'But, Piers, what will Holden say?'—in a tone expressive of exultation and curiosity.

'God knows! Of course he will not believe a word of it.'

Here there was a whistle from the speaking-tube. West responded. 'You are wanted in Mr. Thurston's room, Piers,' he said; and added, as Reginald was about to fold up his memo., 'leave that; Holden will be here directly, and whatever he says, this will "confound his politics."'

'Pooh, I don't care!' said Reginald with elaborate indifference as he went out; but he left the paper behind him.

He was not detained long by the senior partner, who only wanted a little information respecting one of the many cases in progress. When he returned, he found the third occupant of the

inner office standing beside West's table and looking at the paper Piers had left there, with an expression of contemptuous scrutiny.

Holden was considerably older than either of his companions, but, though shrewd and capable, was less trusted by his employers. He was suspected of unsteadiness latterly, and was more than once severely indisposed on the eve of the Derby. He was a thick-set, dark-complexioned man of a lower type than Piers or West, with bushy whiskers, garments of a sporting aspect, and rather shifty black eyes. A covert warfare had always existed between him and Reginald Piers, shown chiefly in a species of shotted chaff, in which the latter had much the best of it, as he was indifferent to his antagonist's enmity, while Holden hated him for his easy superiority and steady though civil rejection of all attempts at familiarity, the more bitterly because the hatred was impotent.

To-day Holden's aspect was forbidding. Generally he was flashily good-looking, but this morning there was a coarseness in his expression, a carelessness about his dress, that bespoke relaxation of self-respect.

'So! you have come into your kingdom,' he exclaimed, looking up as Reginald opened the door, 'or you think you have; but there's many a slip between cup and lip! Are you sure there isn't a nearer of kin than yourself?'

'Certain! Are you so muddle-headed as not to understand that table of degrees?' cried Reginald, who was less cool than usual owing to the excitement of the morning.

'Are you so muddle-headed as not to perceive that everything depends on the marriage, or no-marriage, of this fellow?' pointing to the name of Geoffrey.

'Of course I do,' replied Reginald scornfully. 'But as it is perfectly well known in the family that he died a bachelor, why, there is no more to be said about it.'

'Nevertheless, he may have left descendants who could trouble you. For all you know, you may have to put some of them out of the way yet, and supply a drama in high life to an admiring audience of us poor Plebs.'

'Bah!' returned Reginald. 'It was well known that he never married.'

'My dear fellow, don't grow furious at a small contradiction. What a high and mighty lord of the manor you will be! You know it's all my fun,' said Holden, with irritating good humour and disgusting familiarity. 'I don't doubt your title, and I am as well pleased you are not going to "reign over us" in this humble shrine of the law any longer.'

Reginald made no reply, but sat down to write, having got somewhat in arrear with his morning's work.

'Kingdom or no kingdom, I must obey the behest of our masters while I am in this lower sphere,' said he at length, when he had recovered his momentary irritation enough to speak in his usual tone.

'How soon do you think you will get possession?' asked West.

'I haven't an idea. I dine with Trent to-day. We shall settle what is to be done: but I do not anticipate any difficulty.'

'Had you ever any relations at a little place called Llanogwen?' asked Holden suddenly. He had been in deep thought for some moments, gazing at Reginald's extract from the family tree which still lay on the table before him.

'Not that I know of,' said Reginald carelessly. 'Have you any acquaintance of my name?'

'Acquaintances? oh Lord, no! you and yours are altogether a touch above me,' returned Holden, with a sneer. 'But I think I have heard the name.' So saying, he threw the paper at which he had been staring in a fixed, abstracted way across the table, and turning to his own desk began to open it and move his pens and ruler about in a noisy, reckless manner.

'I saw Admiral Desbarres going up just now,' said West, after all three men had written for some time in silence. 'You know him, don't you, Piers?'

'I have been introduced to him; nothing more.'

'Isn't he a little touched on religious matters?' asked West. 'I remember hearing Mrs. Trent say something to that effect.'

'I say, Piers, do you still hang out at Palmerston Terrace?' asked Holden abruptly. 'I am coming to leave my card on you; for I suppose you intend to give West and myself a spread in honour of your accession. It's clearly your duty.'

'Oh, yes! I will bestow a banquet upon you,' said Reginald drily.

'Well, you may count on me. I'll call round at your place to-morrow evening.'

'I am afraid I shall not be at home.'

'Then I'll try again *and* again, till I find you,' returned Holden, with a rather peculiar laugh.

'You are very good.'

'A gentleman wishes to see Mr. Holden,' said one of the clerks from the outer office.

Holden rose, and went out hastily.

'I think Holden is deuced queer to-day,' said West, looking after him.

'He is in some scrape, or was drinking hard last night,' replied Reginald carelessly; 'but I am not going to finish up by a quarrel with the poor devil. Now I must attend to my work.'

## CHAPTER II.

THE day which had wrought so important a change in the life of Reginald Piers was drawing to a close; and while, in their handsome dining-room, in one of the new squares which fill up the space, physical and social, between Westbourne Terrace and Westbourne Grove, Mr. and Mrs. Trent sat long over their strawberries and sauterne, discussing with their guest his future plans—the owner of a far humbler dwelling was walking slowly through her neat but rather scantily-furnished abode, with a thoughtful and even troubled expression, a tall, very tall, stately woman, perhaps past middle age, though preserving a fine figure, draped in a garment exceedingly ancient as to material, but pieced, and trimmed, and festooned into startling novelty of form. Her still glossy dark hair, streaked slightly with grey, was braided under a contrivance of lace and ribbon which happily preserved the *juste milieu* between the coquettishness of youth and the dignity of age. Her countenance still showed traces of beauty, though the eyes were faded and the lips had grown thin. She had already perambulated the highest story of the house, and had with much deliberation descended to the next, holding on her left arm a cat—a cat with long fine hair, mixed black and yellowish grey—like a beautiful miniature tiger. A long, bushy tail hung over the supporting arm, the fore paws and small shapely head resting on her mistress's shoulder, with an air of profound content; while with her right hand the lady occasionally touched the banisters, regarding her fingers suspiciously, as if on the look-out for dust. Reaching the second floor the lady paused, and called in audible tones, 'Collins!'—a pause—no reply—then to the cat, 'My precious puss! did I wake you up? Collins!' still louder—a faint voice came from the depths, 'Coming, mum.'

'Collins! I am surprised you can let me exhaust myself in this manner, calling *and* calling, when you know I am far from strong. Laziness, Collins, is really a positive sin.' This, while Collins tumbled upstairs at break-neck speed.

'I'm sure, mum, I run the very minit I heard you, and I am sorry . . .'

'There, there, Collins, don't. I must beg you not to talk. I

really cannot bear it. You have quite put what I wanted to say out of my head! Do you know that window in your room is open? I am sure we shall have a storm; go and shut it.'

'Yes, mum; but I am going to bed presently, and then I'll be sure.'

'Now don't answer me, my girl; go and do what I bid you! One of the first duties of a Christian is to obey your pastors and masters,' continued the speaker, as though she enjoyed the catechetical euphony.

'Very well, mum,' proceeding past her mistress at a run.

'Collins! have I not told you that it is not respectful to rush past me in that way? nor is such hurry necessary. And, stay, Collins'—severely—'did you dust these banisters to-day?'

'That I did, mum.'

'I trust you are telling the truth, Collins; but'—holding out her hand, and speaking majestically—'look at that!'

'Well, mum, I did so; but the dust in this house is wusser than—'

'Now don't tell me, Collins, that my house is worse than others—There, Collins,' interrupting herself, 'there's the front-door bell. Go, my girl, go, go, go! though,' she went on as the servant hurled herself downstairs, 'it is too late for any useful visit.' And, stroking the cat softly, she descended leisurely to the ground-floor, where were the dining- and drawing-rooms.

'A letter for you, mum,' said Collins, meeting her in the hall.

'Indeed!' as if a letter were not a common occurrence; and, taking it, she turned it over with much interest, examining the post-mark and reading the superscription—'Mrs. Crewe, 13 Leamington Road, W.' 'It is from the Admiral!' she exclaimed. 'Here, Collins, take my precious Toppy; there is a nice drop of milk left in the jug, give it to her before she goes to bed.' And Mrs. Crewe sallied into her rarely used drawing-room, and, sitting down by an open window, proceeded, with a visible clearing of her countenance, to open her letter and read as follows:—

'Dear Mrs. Crewe,—It is some time since I heard anything of you. I trust you are well and prospering. Will you be so good as to let me know if you have still room for an inmate? My object in asking is that I shall soon want a home for my ward, Laura Piers, of whom you have heard me speak. She has just lost her excellent uncle, the Rev. Mr. Fielden, and with him the fatherly protection she has hitherto enjoyed. Will you, then, take the matter into consideration, and let me know, within the next week,

what sum you would require for this young lady's board and residence? She should of course share your sitting-room, if agreeable to you, and have the advantage of your society.

'I know how moderate and conscientious you are; I therefore add that my young friend's means are limited, and she would require nothing beyond your own ordinary style of living. Further, Mr. Fielden has left a son and daughter, in what position I am not as yet aware. Should I find it necessary to return to them something of the benefits bestowed upon my ward by their father, I would be glad to know if you could accommodate Miss Fielden also, and the boy during his holiday. I am now on my way to Dresden, and hope to bring back my ward in about a fortnight. My address will be—Victoria Hotel, Dresden.

'I trust you have good accounts from your son.

'I am yours very faithfully,

'GEORGE DESBARRES.'

'A ward of the Admiral to reside with me!' ejaculated Mrs. Crewe half aloud. 'Why, it is the very thing!'—and she began to read the letter over again—'something always turns up. I was quite cast down when that Mr. Holden left me, though he was really not a gentleman, and very irregular in his payments. Now, it will be quite different to have a nice girl, a lady of position, with me,' she thought as she folded up the epistle, and locked it away in a shabby little writing-desk with an infirm hinge. Then she looked round rather restlessly, feeling the desperate need of expatiating on her prospects to some one. At that moment enter Collins with the cat.

'She won't drink the milk, mum, anyhow, but she has lapped up nigh half a saucer full of cold water.'

'Has she, the dear? Really, Collins, there is something quite *distinguée* about Toppy, superior to other cats; she has scarcely ever touched milk since she was quite a kitten. Give her to me! And, Collins, do you think we could put two beds in the large back room on the second floor?'

'It would be a tight fit, mum.'

'I am afraid it would; but I might take it myself, and give them the front one.'

'Are you expecting new lodgers, mum?'

'I wish, Collins, you would not express yourself with such vulgarity. I do not keep a lodging-house; I take a few well-recommended inmates.'

'Law, mum, I thought "inmates" was only in lunatic asylums and workhouses.'

'Never mind, Collins'—with a superior smile. 'I rather expect a young lady, perhaps two, to reside with me; that is, their guardian, Rear-Admiral Desbarres, wishes to place them under my care.'

'Well, mum! I do hope and pray you are not thinking of setting up a boarding-school. You have been a kind missus, and I always wished to stay on with you, but a school I can't abide! I was eighteen months in one, till my bones were near through my skin with hard work; and the poor lady as kept it, she was druv nearly out of her mind, what with the young ladies writing notes to the Commercial Academy gentlemen, and sending out for sweets till they were *that* sick. Her heart broke over it all, and she died within a year after I left!' This was uttered with immense volubility.

'What a dreadful story!' returned Mrs. Crewe; 'but of course these young ladies are quite different, and no doubt of a different class.'

'Don't you think it, mum; in or out of class, they are all the same.'

'Besides,' continued Mrs. Crewe, 'I do not dream of having a school. There, you may go, Collins; and as you have cleaned up the morning-room and kitchen, and must be tired, you can take the rest of that bottle of ale with your bread and cheese.'

'Thank you, mum'—going.

'And, Collins, have you heard how Mr. Brown is to-day?'

'No, mum; but I suppose he must be better, for there's Miss Brown a-watering the back garden.'

'Is she? I will go and speak to her. Collins! be sure you shut your window; I will put Topsy to bed myself.'

So saying, Mrs. Crewe issued forth into the entrance passage and proceeded to descend the few steps which led into the garden. The little space in the rear of the house was judiciously laid out, being principally occupied by a large grass-plot having a group of rose-bushes in the centre, a couple of horse-chestnut trees at the end, and a border of bright flowers and mignonette between the gravel-walk and side walls. It was neat and well kept, thanks chiefly to the personal exertions of the owner, who considered gardening a lady-like occupation.

The next strip of garden was much more elaborately ornamented; it had box edgings and tiny, many-coloured flower-beds, a spasmodic fountain, and two or three plaster figures. The owners were an elderly brother and sister—the former, managing clerk in



a City warehouse—both patronised by Mrs. Crewe as ‘good, well-meaning creatures, though not what you would call *gentry* ;’ nevertheless, a source of comfort to the somewhat lonely widow, who found it a relief to talk about herself, her son, her affairs, her trials, and former grandeur, to the shrewd little old maid who looked somewhat enviously up to her as a brilliant woman of the world.

‘Good evening, Miss Brown,’ said Mrs. Crewe, stepping up, always with stateliness, on a large reversed flower-pot, thus bringing her head well above the wall ; ‘I hope your brother is better.’

‘Yes, thank you,’ raising her head from the flowers over which she was stooping, and standing watering-pot in hand. ‘The attack is passing away ; he hopes to go to business on Monday.’

‘Colds are much worse in summer,’ observed Mrs. Crewe ; ‘his attack was pleurisy, was it not ?’

‘It was, ma’am ; but he is nearly himself again and sitting in the front parlour. I am sure if you could spare half-an-hour just for a little talk, it would cheer him ever so.’

‘I regret extremely that I cannot this evening ; I have sent the girl to bed. She has to be up for the washing very early, and I do not like to leave the house. To-morrow I shall be most happy to pay Mr. Brown a visit.’

‘Thank you, Mrs. Crewe ; you are very good. And, pray, ma’am, have you heard of any one in the place of the young man that’s gone ? You know, I have not seen you for a week.’

‘Not exactly,’ returned Mrs. Crewe, drawing herself up with an air of elegant *hauteur*.

‘Dear, dear !’ exclaimed Miss Brown. ‘That’s sad ! Take my word for it, ma’am, there is nothing like a card in the window. If you would only put one up, Mrs. Crewe, you would let in twenty-four hours.’

‘Perhaps so, Miss Brown, but it would not suit *me*. Mine is not a mere lodging, or even “rooms to let ;” but, having a house too large for my requirements, I am willing to accommodate a gentleman or two, personally recommended. However, it is possible I may change my plans. I have just had a charming letter from an old and valued friend, Rear-Admiral Desbarres, who wishes to place a young lady of good position (his ward), and probably her cousin, under my care. It will be rather a tie, and they may expect me to introduce them into society ; but that I really cannot do, the effort would be too great.’

‘Well, I’m sure I am delighted to hear it. It is a great piece of luck for you. I suppose they will pay well ?’

‘We have not entered into that part of the question yet,’ said

Mrs. Crewe loftily. 'With such a man as the Admiral it is not necessary to bargain.'

'He must be one in a thousand,' remarked Miss Brown simply.

'He *is*,' returned Mrs. Crewe emphatically. 'Still, it is as well to form some idea of what one ought to ask. Of course I shall require to keep a good table.'

'Of course,' said Miss Brown. 'You'll want a joint, vegetables, and sweets every day, with poultry sometimes, and fish now and then; and *that's* not to be done for nothing.'

'True, Miss Brown; though I must say that the aristocracy care more for elegance in serving than delicacy in eating,' replied Mrs. Crewe, with the air of saying a good thing.

'Aristocracy! Is she a "*ladyship*," then?' cried Miss Brown.

'No! She belongs to the untitled aristocracy; she is of very old family and highly connected.'

'I hope she is well off,' observed Miss Brown severely. 'High-born paupers are very expensive customers, I believe.'

'"Pauper" is a curious term to apply to the ward of a rear admiral and the cousin of——'

'Dear, dear! I never intended to apply nothing! It is only my interest in *you*, ma'am, that made me speak: you are that generous and confiding.'

'I am much obliged to you,' said Mrs. Crewe stiffly and offended; 'but I don't think you quite understand my character. I hope I am just, but I am not aware that I am *confiding*.'

'Ahem!' said Miss Brown. 'At any rate,' she resumed after a short pause, 'aristocratic or not, you can't board the young lady under thirty shillings a week; then there's the rent of her rooms.'

'She will use my drawing-room,' interrupted Mrs. Crewe.

'With her bed-room, you could not ask less than five guineas a month; and what with fire, and light, and linen, and additional trouble to the "*gurl*,"' ran on Miss Brown rapidly, 'to say nothing of your own care and company, a hundred and fifty a year wouldn't pay you. You ask two hundred, Mrs. Crewe.'

'I shall ask what I think fit,' returned that lady sternly. 'There are some subjects on which we by no means think alike.'

'Very likely, ma'am,' said Miss Brown, suddenly lapsing into humility. 'Our up-brings have been different.'

'Perhaps so, Miss Brown; and now it is getting quite dusk I will say "Good evening." My compliments to your brother; I am glad he is better. I shall do myself the pleasure of calling on him to-morrow.' And with much dignity Mrs. Crewe stepped down from her flower-pot and sailed into the house, depositing the cat in her bed, and proceeded to lock the doors and shut up for the night.

Then, pen in hand, she sat long, with a pleased countenance, by the light of a single candle, covering scraps of paper with hieroglyphics in writing and figures which seemed traced with the point of a skewer, rather than a pen. At length the sound of a latch-key, gently turned, followed by the striking of a match, told her that her upstairs tenant, a quiet, elderly man who occupied a bed and sitting-room on the first floor, was safely housed. Then, after a final and searching look round the premises, she, too, retired.

‘There is a tide in the affairs of men ;’ and in the inner life, too, there is a gathering of the waters at particular periods when events and emotions accumulate, and waves of joy or sorrow mount to a certain pitch, ebbing back after a while to the ordinary level of existence.

Such a pitch had been reached by Laura Piers and Winifrid Fielden when the former wrote her appeal for help to the Admiral.

Hitherto theirs had been a tranquil, simple life, sheltered in a peaceful home, and looking up to father and uncle as the most charming and accomplished of men.

The Reverend Frederic Fielden had held for many years the small living of Cheddington in one of the southern shires—a beautiful pastoral district where life was only half alive, and of which Mr. Fielden, whose nature craved very different surroundings, had soon tired. He was a gentle, sociable, semi-artistic personage, exceedingly self-indulgent in an amiable manner, and afflicted with what his wife termed ‘a sensitive soul ;’ i.e. utter want of endurance, an irresistible tendency to run away from everything disagreeable, and to shut his eyes to everything unpleasant. Fortunately for him, he had a wife who guided while she adored him ; and it was owing to her influence that he had not, while their children were quite young, given up the modest competence which his sleepy little living afforded, in the vain hope of existing on the pittance he could call his own, by impossible economics, in some congenial foreign town.

But Mrs. Fielden was resolute in her determination to hold fast the substance they possessed, at any rate till the children were set forth in life ; that is to say, the boys. So she skilfully kept the family together on a wonderfully small amount, and gave her parson rope enough to disport himself mildly in town each year viewing the exhibitions, attending classical concerts, and hearing the most fashionable clerical orators, so rendering life bearable. But, in addition to her own flock, the parson’s good wife took a little stray lamb into her pleasant fold.

One of Mr. Fielden’s sisters had married an officer, a quiet,

thoughtful, promising young man. It was a love match, and against every one's consent. For Captain Piers had little or nothing but his pay. Nevertheless, they married and enjoyed some three or four years of great happiness before fever, during an extra unhealthy season in the West Indies, cut them both off, leaving a baby girl of about a year old.

Among the acquaintances formed by Captain Piers during his military career was Admiral Desbarres, and some especial sympathy drew them together. It was the Admiral who saw to the funeral of the young wife (who was the first to succumb), and it was he also who soothed the last moments of the father by a solemn promise to look after the poor bereaved baby, and, if possible, to induce Mrs. Fielden to give the little creature house-room. 'She is a kind, good woman,' gasped the dying man; 'she always loved my wife, and there isn't another soul on earth I could turn to, nor have I a claim on mortal.'

The Admiral earnestly promised to do his best, and he did it.

Mrs. Fielden was too motherly a woman to refuse this last request, so little Laura became as one of the family at the parsonage. The Admiral, thankful to have his helpless ward so well provided for, carefully nursed the few hundreds which was all the provision left for her, adding interest to capital till, when she was old enough, he was able with a little help from his own purse to share with Mrs. Fielden the cost of a governess for the cousins; for a little girl had appeared in the clerical nest about a year and a half after Laura had been lodged there.

Thus Laura Piers and Winifrid Fielden grew up like sisters, the former scarce knowing she was an orphan. She was petted and punished by her aunt; snubbed, sent of messages, and occasionally told she was a trump by the eldest boy, who was rather a hero to both girls; and decidedly a favourite with her uncle as she grew to be useful to him at a wonderfully early age—hunting out passages for quotation, and authorities on theological or artistic subjects, when he composed his sermons or wrote letters on the proper punctuation of Shakespearian sentences, or articles on the influence of religion on art, or *vice versâ*. For Laura, though not pleasing to the eye, like his own daughter, was a clever, thoughtful little thing, passionately fond of books, and careful and loving in her treatment of them.

Among the group associated with those happy, tranquil early days the figure of Reginald Piers was prominent.

He was the favourite chum of Dick Fielden, the eldest son, and frequently a guest at the Rectory during the holidays; for he was the only son of a widowed mother whose means of affording pleasures or advantages to her boy were extremely limited, especi-

ally as she had in later years resided with a married daughter, who had made what was considered a 'splendid match.'

Reginald was a general favourite. He was a good cricketer, a successful angler, a tolerable shot, easy-going, and sufficiently vain to take pleasure in pleasing. As he was a little older than her own son, Mrs. Fielden treated him with an amount of confidence she never bestowed on Dick; while Laura regarded him as an Admirable Crichton, and gloried in the slender degree of relationship he condescended to admit.

The last holidays spent by Reginald at the Rectory had had a peculiar charm for the Rector's orphan niece, as he had especially patronised her, trying his 'prentice hand' at the art of delicate attention; for Reginald showed a decided predilection for young ladies, even at the risk of being considered and called a 'muff' by his companions.

But the Rectory had seen its best days. The winter in which Laura attained her sixteenth and Winifrid her fourteenth year, Mrs. Fielden, never very strong, caught a severe cold, which soon became bronchitis, and finally robbed the family of their best friend and firmest stay.

To Mr. Fielden the loss was irreparable. Cheddington became insupportable to his 'sensitive soul;' and, fancying he could with the help of some small savings, painfully scraped together by his provident wife, and the pursuit of literature, eke out existence on his infinitesimal income more agreeably on the Continent, he gave up his living, sold his superfluous books and belongings, and much against the advice of his eldest son, who had already made his first step in life—a considerable stride, as it carried him to Bombay—removed himself, his youngest boy, and the 'dear girls' to Dresden, where *they* could find educational advantages, and himself the repose his broken health and broken heart required.

Here they spent two very comfortable years: an English clergyman of good private means (so report endowed him), charming manners, artistic tastes, and interesting circumstances, was hailed as an acquisition by the Anglo-American colony in that social city. His occasional sermons, when health enabled him to lighten the labours of the overworked chaplain, were universally admired, and altogether Mr. Fielden found the change from a rural parish to the Saxon capital answered in every respect remarkably well except financially.

He was indeed at times painfully surprised to find how rapidly money melted away, though food was moderate, and amusements cheap. To be sure amusements never entered into the Cheddington budget; but at Dresden it was quite necessary that the 'dear

girls' should attend the theatre to improve their knowledge of German, and the concerts to improve their taste for music, while it was impossible to accept the constant hospitality of compatriots without making some return ; so the Rev. Mr. Fielden's æsthetic teas became quite the rage, and his opinion on all matters of taste universally deferred to. Meantime his funds dwindled away with alarming rapidity, though he consoled himself by hoping that his book on 'Historic and Artistic Dresden,' for which he hoped to receive a handsome sum from that enterprising firm 'James Younger & Co.,' would put him straight, and then he would retire to some quiet nook in Switzerland, and practise strict economy till Herbert was fit to adopt a career.

The third year of their sojourn, however, was not so pleasant. Laura, who was housekeeper, found it very difficult to get the money requisite for daily needs. Herbert's school accounts remained unpaid. Whispers got about that the family in Christian Strasse were not flourishing so fairly as they did at first. Then both Laura and Winifrid perceived a great change in the tenderly cared-for father and uncle. He could not write, or talk, or amuse himself, as he used ; then a low fever attacked him, against which he seemed to have no power of resistance, and before he was thought in danger, he seemed in some mysterious way to give himself up, and died.

The suddenness of this event paralysed Winifrid, who was her father's idol ; she could only think of her bereavement. But Laura, on whom the rougher and commoner cares of their daily life always devolved, was, while truly and profoundly grieved to lose so dear and kind a protector, puzzled and terrified by the utter emptiness of the exchequer.

The Fieldens had never kept up much intercourse with their relatives ; and when the half-frightened, sorrowing girls had written to an uncle in India, and an aunt who had married a merchant in Liverpool, they had no more to do but to sit with folded hands and wait what help the Admiral would bring.

As yet Laura knew him only by frequent gifts and rare visits, but she felt instinctively that he would not fail her. And when he came, what would be their destiny ? Should she have to separate from Winnie, who, though little more than two years her junior, was like her child ; and Herbert ! who would look after *him*, and keep him brushed and mended, and prepared for school ?

Where were they to go ? What was to become of them ? In the midst of these sad conjectures, before almost they thought the Admiral could have received her letter, came a telegram to Laura from her guardian.

'I will be with you the day after to-morrow. Refer all persons to me.'

Then she breathed more freely and got a little sleep.

### CHAPTER III.

It was a disheartening task which the Admiral set himself, to disentangle the hopeless confusion of Mr. Fielden's affairs. He had left no will. The death of his wife nullified the one he had originally executed, and it had been destroyed; but he had never brought himself to make another. Little, indeed, was left. He had many years previously insured his life, and paid the premiums with regularity; but then it was found that he had borrowed upon it, so that not much was left—barely what sufficed to clear the family credit in Dresden.

During the fortnight which succeeded Admiral Desbarres' arrival, though gentle and tender to the orphans, he said very little as to his intentions. He was, at all times, a man of few words, and those few were principally addressed to Laura, with whom he went over the books and accounts. He meanwhile cogitated his plans in silence. If he took these young people under his protection, he would arrange all things, and nothing save obedience would remain for them.

He was by conviction and training a despot, of the kindest and most benevolent description; but still a despot—all law, according to his belief, emanating from a Supreme Ruler. Family and social relations were but inner rings of the great circle, and ought to reproduce in miniature the same system of fatherly protection and childlike submission. This silence was hard to Laura, although by nature patient and reasonable; but it was intolerable to Winnie, an eager, sanguine, warm-hearted creature—the beauty and the pet of the family.

She was considerably impressed by the Admiral's imposing tranquillity and weighty presence. 'What is he going to do with us?' she asked impatiently, one evening, nearly a fortnight after her father's funeral, when the Admiral had taken Herbert out to walk, and the two girls were left alone in the once pretty *salon*, which now looked so bare and desolate, as all the books and photographs and small ornaments had been packed up, and everything sold or made ready for their departure. Winnie had thrown herself into the large arm-chair, which had always been Mr. Fielden's. It was drawn up by the open window, commanding a view of some pleasant gardens and the distant dome of the Russian church. Winnie was a tall, slender girl, with sloping shoulders and a pliant

waist, carelessly graceful in every movement, with a clear though somewhat brown complexion, pale when in repose, but with a rich, mantling colour that came and went when she was surprised or pleased or vexed or moved in any way, and was a means of expression second only to her large liquid eyes, which some thought deepest blue, and others darkest hazel, and which at this period of her life revealed every passing emotion, as if the soul that looked through them was still 'as that of a little child.' 'What is he going to do with us, Laura? How I wish he would leave us here—we could live more cheaply than in London, and far, far more happily. I suppose we are to go to London?'

'I think so, though the Admiral has not said so positively.'

'If I am to do anything,' resumed Winnie, pushing back her rich wavy dark brown hair, 'to earn money, I mean, I would rather do it here, though I hate the idea of having to do it at all. How it would have broken my poor darling father's heart to think of such a thing! But I suppose I must, Laura?'

'We both must, dear Winnie. I do not see how we can live without it. I cannot be dependent on my guardian, though he would not let me broach the subject, and told me to wait till he had laid his plans.'

'But *I* am not his ward. I have a right to choose; and I don't suppose he thinks of supporting *me*. I would not let him, if he did. Oh Laura, if he takes you away, what is to become of Herbert and me? Dick is not rich enough to have us with him in India. How maddening it is to be such a burden—yet, what can I do? Oh, my father, my father!' and the ready tears began to flow afresh.

'Dear, dear Winnie,' murmured Laura, holding back her own, though her lips quivered as she knelt down, and, putting her arms round her cousin's waist, laid her head on her lap. 'Try and have patience; we are so young and helpless, and the Admiral has always been so good and kind, what can we do but trust him and wait his time? He told me just as he was going out that we were to start for London on Monday, and when there, he would be able to tell me his intentions. Do not vex him by seeming restless or dissatisfied. He only tries to do what is best for us.'

'I dare say; but it is too bad not to be consulted. I declare I will ask him myself this evening—he always answers me.'

'Yes,' returned Laura, with a kindly smile, 'as usual you are a favourite,' and she rose and leant against the window, gazing sadly out over the garden, and inhaling the perfume of mignonette which was wafted from it.

Laura was less reluctant to quit Dresden than her cousin. She



had been too seriously alarmed by the difficulties with which she had had to contend during the last eight or nine months to permit of forming such pleasant impressions as Winnie, who seldom troubled herself about anything, and in some vague way thought that breakfast, dinner, and supper were a spontaneous growth which would always be ready for people in their position.

Laura did not resemble her cousin. She was not short, but she was not so tall as Winnie, and, though straight and well-made enough, was rather high-shouldered and square-looking. Her features, too, were irregular; the jaw somewhat large, the mouth somewhat wide, though it could smile honestly, sweetly, and showed fine white teeth. Then her complexion was sallow, and her hair a dull brown; nor had she fine eyes to redeem other deficiencies—they were well shaped, but of a pale grey, with little brilliancy, though there were topics at which they would light up and ~~change~~ the aspect of her face amazingly. Still, Laura Piers was always considered a 'plain girl;' but she was possessed of a certain gentle composure of manner, a self-possession that was never cold, which made her presence soothing to irritable people, and acceptable to all.

Laura was by nature an artist—gifted with that marvellous power of sympathy which bestows upon the possessor almost 'second sight;' and, besides, a love of beauty so deep and keen, that she never looked in the glass without a sigh to see how little she possessed of that most precious dower.

Yet, though this regret might occasionally sadden, it never embittered, partly perhaps because she had been brought up in an atmosphere of kindness and genuine affection; partly because she had an inner consciousness that the joys of intellect could compensate for much.

'Yes! I will talk to him to-night,' continued Winnie, drying her eyes. 'He is a dear. I am sure I do not know what would have become of us without him; but I don't like to be driven blindfold about the world, and I cannot part with you, Laura—you know I can't, dear, dear Laura,' kissing her fondly. 'I never knew I loved you so much.'

A slight glow mounted to Laura's cheek, and even shone through the tears that filled her eyes as she pressed Winnie to her.

'I don't think the Admiral will do that—not willingly, I am sure; but we cannot yet know what will become of us.'

Winnie kept her word. Their usual supper was not quite over, when, with an effort for which she was almost angry with herself, she exclaimed, 'Dear Admiral Desbarres, Laura says we are going

to leave on Monday. Would you mind telling where we are going—I mean, in London.'

The Admiral looked at the speaker at first gravely; then gradually an indulgent smile overspread his face.

'I think, Winifrid, you might trust me; nevertheless, it is time you should be told, dear children, of my plans, so far as I can form them. For the present, I mean to place you with a lady whom I have known for many years, the widow of an old shipmate of mine, Mrs. Crewe, where I hope you can dwell in comfort, until I can ascertain what Winnie's aunt and brother can do to assist her. Should they be unable or unwilling, believe me I will not desert you, Winnie.'

'You are ever so good and kind,' cried Winnie, flushing with mortification, while her eyes sparkled through her tears, 'but how dreadful it is to be—a beggar.' The word was brought out with a sob—'I must try and do something—I can teach German and music and——'

'For the present, you must be guided by me,' interrupted the Admiral, in his slow deliberate tones. 'Hereafter we may arrange some such plan—for the present your youth and helplessness is a claim upon those who have the means to befriend you; and these necessities, though painful, are but the expression of a law which emanates from One whose supreme will must not be resisted.'

'And I shall stay with Laura?'

'I would never willingly separate you,' returned the Admiral kindly.

'Thank God for that!' cried Winnie. 'But I do hope this lady, this Mrs. Crewe, is not severe and——'

'I can only repeat that the charge of caring for you seems to have been given into my hands. I must therefore demand from you that submission which alone can enable me to fulfil the responsibilities I have undertaken. I will say good-night now, as I must write some letters before I go to bed.'

It was not much that Winnie had extracted from the arbiter of their fate, but it was satisfactory so far, and she felt less uneasy.

The hours slipped quickly by, and soon the last day came. Laura and Winnie escaped in the fresh early morning, when there was small chance of meeting any acquaintance, to look once more on the river with its smiling border of vineyards and trees up to where it makes a wide bend beneath the villa of the Prussian Prince who gave up royalty for love.

It was a delicious morning; the river sparkled in the tender early sunshine, the air was crisp with the youthfulness of spring,

and both girls exclaimed that never before had the view of Dresden and its old bridge, with the towers of the Hof-Kirch and Schloss, looked so lovely. They had crossed to the gardens of the Japanese Palace, after strolling along the Bruhl'sche Terrasse, and looked long in silence on the old town which probably they would never see again; then, with a mutual sudden impulse, a vivid flash of feeling that they had nothing left save each other, they exchanged a hearty kiss, which, without uttering a word, each felt was a pledge of loyalty and love.

And so they looked their last on Dresden.

The arrival of the Admiral's ward and her cousin was a great event for Mrs. Crewe. In the first place, it set her mind at ease on the momentous question of rent; next, it raised her in her own esteem, and Mrs. Crewe's mental spectacles were of high magnifying power; then the presence of two young ladies in the house promised cheerfulness and company, which latter was very dear to Mrs. Crewe's heart, in spite of her troubles and disappointments; finally, it would be very pleasant for 'Denzil' when he came home. Denzil was her son, the only survivor of several children, who had passed away in those terrible former days when the 'expensive habits'—*i.e.* furious drinking—of her late dear husband hardly left them food to eat. It need scarcely be said that Denzil was her idol, the one object that filled her life and satisfied her imagination. He was, unlike most idols, a good son, a quiet, steady fellow, who from stress of circumstances had entered the merchant service instead of the royal navy, much to his mother's mortification; indeed, she never mentioned the fact without an elaborate explanation.

'Collins' had a hard time of it from the day Mrs. Crewe received the Admiral's reply readily accepting the terms she proposed. Not only the apartments to be occupied by the young ladies, but every portion of the house, 'from turret to foundation-stone,' had to be brushed, scoured, polished, and dusted. The life of the mild upstairs tenant, Mr. Jenkins, was made a burden to him by the disarrangement of his belongings in this tremendous cleaning; and even Collins' powers of endurance would have come to an end, but that in a certain degree she shared her mistress's brilliant anticipations of the indefinite benefits to accrue from such desirable boarders.

Everything was in order, however, by the time the travellers arrived. Flowers in the vases, and fresh antimacassars bristling with starch from the over-plentiful nature of domestic washing, adorned the drawing-room, while an excellent breakfast or luncheon was laid out in the little dining-room behind.

'I am sure, my dears, you are welcome to what I trust you will consider as your home,' exclaimed Mrs. Crewe, with a delightful mixture of dignity and cordiality, as she stood at the front door to receive her new inmates, who looked weary enough with their dusty black dresses and white faces. 'Miss Piers, I presume,' smiling upon Winnie, who happened to come first.

'No! I am Winnie Fielden.'

'Oh! I am truly glad to see you; and this is your brother, Miss Fielden, dear fellow! I love all boys for the sake of my own! Come in; you must be so dreadfully tired. How many hours have you been *en route*—thirty-eight? dreadful!—had you a tolerable passage?'

'Horrible,' exclaimed Laura, with a shudder, as they followed their hostess upstairs.

'Poor Laura was dreadfully ill,' said Winnie, with a slight smile, 'but I rather liked crossing; I stayed very late on deck with the Admiral.'

'Well, there is your room—very simple, as you see, but I trust homelike and comfortable. Pray ring for anything you may want, for I must leave you—I have not spoken to the Admiral yet.'

She swept away to meet the general benefactor, and express to him her gratitude, her satisfaction, her admiration of these 'charming girls,' who, at the first glance, she saw would be an 'acquisition to any family.'

But there was in the profound gentle composure of the Admiral an irresistible something that quenched in an indefinable way the fire of Mrs. Crewe's eloquence, and she was soon listening to him in silence, as in a few clear sentences he thanked her for the help she had afforded him, by receiving the young people on such moderate terms.

'I trust my own ward will remain with you permanently; as to Miss Fielden, I do not know what her brother or other relations may wish for her, but at any rate it is a great relief to place both girls, for the present, with you. You know how I am situated. Having made a home with my invalid sister, I can neither leave her nor introduce any disturbing element into our house; and youth, however amiable, must be disturbing.'

Then Mrs. Crewe ventured to touch on her own affairs, and tell how her son Denzil had sailed as chief officer in one of Duncan's ships, how he had contrived to save enough to share a venture of merchandise on his own account, besides helping herself to pay the last instalment of her debt to her listener, 'which I have ready for you, my dear sir, in a purse of my own netting,' she concluded; 'the only sort of fancy-work I could ever accomplish;

and this is all I can pay of the immense obligation I owe you—in fact, my present independence; for though it has been a struggle, I *do* make both ends meet in this house; and with your ward——’

But the entrance of the girls, quickly followed by Herbert, checked her speech, and relieved the Admiral from the necessity of a reply:

And now Mrs. Crewe was in her element, conscious of having on her best black silk, which suited her well, her choicest cap, her watch, and her *châtelaine*, crowded with charms and trinkets, the crown jewel to which she had tenaciously clung through many a bitter day of despondency and privation. She had a bland delight in patronising these ‘elegant girls,’ and the boy who, though ‘not good-looking, had a charming countenance.’ Good-looking Herbert certainly was not. He was a very ugly likeness of his handsome sister, with a wide mouth, limp, straight, straw-coloured hair, and a complexion naturally dirty-looking, and little improved by any care he bestowed upon it. He was tall of his age, but stooped awkwardly, and with huge hands and feet and ill-cut German clothes he was anything but attractive. Both Winnie and her brother were honestly hungry; but Laura could not eat; she was therefore the object of much persecution. ‘My dear Miss Piers, you take nothing; let me give you the least bit of this veal and ham pie, with a little jelly and a morsel of egg. My cook is rather remarkable for her meat pies—it distresses me to see you unable to eat—would you like my smelling-salts?—let me open the window beside you,’ &c.

‘The tea is so nice, it will do me good; I shall be better presently,’ murmured poor Laura, whose head ached terribly.

‘How nice it is to see an English breakfast-table, so bright and clean!’ cried Winnie. ‘Though I am very fond of Germany, there is no place like England for niceties.’

‘I am charmed to hear you say so,’ exclaimed Mrs. Crewe radiantly; ‘I feared you would think but little of my humble cottage after foreign grandeur. But this is really a very convenient house and a most improving neighbourhood. The White Hart omnibuses now come to the end of the street, and you see we have a nice garden at the back! I assure you I never buy a pennyworth of mustard-and-cress, radishes, or parsley,’ concluded Mrs. Crewe triumphantly.

‘It is an exceedingly suitable abode,’ remarked the Admiral, ‘and does credit to its owner.’

‘You flatter me, my dear sir! but, indeed, if there is one thing more than another on which I pique myself, it is order—order and cleanliness!—and no words can tell the difficulties of maintaining either with ignorant, self-willed servants. Really, nowadays,

with these newfangled notions about education, and women's rights, and all that, it is almost impossible to keep house !'

'We are terribly in need of that most excellent virtue, obedience, in these latter days,' said the Admiral thoughtfully. 'Few think of the help they can give to government by submission, instead of rebelling and finding fault.'

'Quite true,' replied Mrs. Crewe, with a profound tone ; 'but your young friends must not suppose that I am a dragon of severity ; on the contrary, I like a cheerful home and freedom for every one : and though I have but few acquaintances (indeed, there are not many of my own rank of life around me), I trust we shall not be dull. By the by, young ladies, I have not introduced you to a very important member of the family ;' and Mrs. Crewe rose, and walking to the little sofa standing at one side of the fireplace, took up the cat, which was sleeping there in profound repose, regardless of the smart red ribbon with which she was decorated in honour of the day.

'This is my sweet Toppy, Miss Piers—is she not a beauty, Miss Fielden ? Remember' (to Herbert), 'whatever pranks you may play, I will never forgive any against Toppy. Is she not beautifully marked ? and *such* a lovely tail ? Do you know, an old friend of mine, Major St. George, told me that his sister, the Countess of Achill, would give twenty pounds for such a cat (she is a great cat-fancier) ; but no twenty pounds would buy *my* Toppy !'—kissing the creature, who winked with preternatural gravity.

'She is very pretty,' said Laura, stroking it gently.

'Very pretty,' echoed Winnie, without, however, touching it.

'It is curious to study the nature of animals,' remarked the Admiral, patting its head ; but the moment he touched its fur, puss gave a sudden, sharp, vicious mew, and struggled to get away.

'How very extraordinary !' exclaimed Mrs. Crewe ; 'I never knew Toppy behave so badly ; she is generally the gentlest and most amiable of cats. I wonder'—examining her dress—'if I have a pin anywhere ?'

Meantime, unseen by any one, Winnie gave Herbert a noiseless kick and a warning look, while Mrs. Crewe deposited Toppy on the sofa and returned to the table. A little more conversation, intermittent and slightly forced, ensued, in which the weary, depressed girls took no part, and then the Admiral rose.

'I shall now leave you,' he said, 'to make each other's acquaintance. To-morrow afternoon I hope to call and to have favourable letters for you, my dear,' to Winnie. 'I shall be as usual at the "Burlington," and shall remain about a week in town. Good morning, Mrs. Crewe ; I feel happy in leaving my young charges

under your care. God bless you, dear children, and direct you in this beginning of a new life.'

Laura, always self-controlled, only took his hand and pressed it lingeringly in both her own, while she murmured, 'How can we thank you enough?' but Winnie, with a sudden movement, threw her arms round his neck and kissed his cheek. 'You will be sure to come to-morrow, will you not?' she whispered.

'Yes, Winifrid, without fail,' said the Admiral emphatically, while he tenderly returned her embrace. The old man was visibly touched, and the moisture shone in his still beautiful dark eyes. 'Be of good cheer,' he added kindly, as he shook hands with Herbert; 'for young creatures like you there is many a bright day in store behind the sad present; only keep a clear conscience before Heaven, and all things will work together for your good.' And with a courteous wave of the hand he left them.

'I am sure,' exclaimed Mrs. Crewe, taking her handkerchief from her eyes (she was easily affected), 'if ever there was a thorough gentleman and a true Christian, it is Admiral Desbarres! He is a saint upon earth, though one always thinks of a saint in a long woollen gown with a rope round his waist, whereas the Admiral is always so *well* dressed'—in a tone of the highest admiration—'which shows that true religion need not interfere with the elegancies of life! My dear girls, you must cheer up; I will do my very best to make you happy! look upon me as a mother. I have lost two dear little girls, and I have a mother's heart.' She embraced one after the other, or would have done so, only Herbert dodged and made a snatch at her hand.

'Thank you, dear Mrs. Crewe,' said Winnie.

'You are very good indeed,' added Laura.

'And now, would you like to lie down and rest awhile? You must be quite worn out!'

'Thank you,' said Laura; 'I think I should like to put our things a little in order, and then I will try to sleep.'

'Do so, dear Laura. I am not going to call you by your surname any more; we must be at home with each other.'

'Certainly, Mrs. Crewe.'

'And you, Master Herbert?'

'Well,' replied that young gentleman, 'I should like to go out and take a stroll, just to see what the place is like.'

'Very well, Herbert; only, do not lose your way, my boy.'

'If I do, I speak the language, you know.'

'When we first went to Dresden,' explained Laura, 'and he was quite a little fellow, he wandered out one morning and never came back till night.'

'You must have been terrified!' exclaimed Mrs. Crewe. 'Here, dear, here is your travelling bag; you left it in the hall.'

And as the cousins ascended the stairs they heard the front door shut after Herbert, while Mrs. Crewe was calling in audible tones, 'Collins! Collins! come and clear away the breakfast-things! Now don't delay; there's plenty to do!'

On reaching their own room, Laura, by an impulse unusual with her, locked the door, and sitting down beside the dressing-table bent her elbows upon it, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears which she vainly tried to suppress.

'Dear Laura!' cried Winnie, putting her arms round her and looking dismayed—for she was more accustomed to receive than to administer consolation—'what is the matter? Do you feel very ill?'

'What is the matter?' repeated Laura with a sob; 'there is plenty the matter, I think! I don't know how it is, but it suddenly seems so awful to be here away from every one we ever knew. If we had been left at dear Cheddington, the good Squire and his wife, and the Doctor, and every one would have been old friends and helped us; and at Dresden there was the Gräfin and the Macdonalds all so kind; but here ——' an expressive pause.

'Oh! yes, it is dreadful; but then Mrs. Crewe seems very good and pleasant—much better than I expected.'

'Yes, she *is* nice, and I think I am quite over-tired. I shall just unpack the box, and then I will lie down.'

'It is rather bare,' observed Winnie, looking round the room with a dissatisfied expression; 'yet I do not see how there would be room for anything more. I wish there was one of those delightful bureau-wardrobe contrivances we had in Dresden, with little drawers and pigeon-holes. I don't know how you will contrive to be tidy *here*, Laura.'

'Oh! we must be doubly tidy, or it will be intolerable,' said Laura, drying her eyes; 'and it is the only place we can have to ourselves, for we can scarcely write, or paint, or do anything downstairs, I suppose.'

So saying, Laura rose, and began rather wearily to open and unpack a large box, which was all they had brought with them. 'When the rest of our things come, where in the world shall we put them?' asked Winnie, standing in the middle of the room, her hands folded and her eyes wide open with a puzzled expression.

'Oh! I dare say there is a box-room or some such place. Come and help me, like a dear girl—you look so distracted standing there! I feel better already from doing something,' returned Laura.

'And I feel as if I should never care to do anything again,' cried Winnie, suddenly dropping on her knees and beginning to



pull out the contents of the box vehemently. 'To think that I shall never, never hear his dear voice, nor see him smile as he used when I had a pretty new hat or anything that suited me; and my father was not old, Laura—not quite sixty-one. I sometimes feel so angry with myself, because I forget for a few minutes, and am amused. Why, I could have burst out laughing to-day when Mrs. Crewe was praising the cat, and Herbert pinched its tail and made it almost bite that angel of an Admiral—I never felt so fond of him before. But Mrs. Crewe is *great* fun: she is so elegant and aristocratic,—still, she is quite a lady, and I am a shade less miserable since I saw her. Oh Laura! is it not contemptible to change about as I do?'

'I don't know,' said Laura, sadly catching a roll of music which Winnie tossed to her. 'You can't help your nature, and anything is better than pretending to be what you are not; besides, if one was *always* so wretched as one is at moments, you would go mad or die.'

'That's true,' ejaculated Winnie. After a short silence, she rose from her knees and went to one of the windows, peeping through the chink between the edge of the blind and the window-frame. 'It is rather a nice little street; all the houses have gardens in front, and trees, but they are very small and low; and'—turning to the dressing-table, which was rather unsteady, but elegantly draped with white muslin and pink lining—'what an awful glass! my face looks absolutely green, and quite stumpy; and did you ever see such a marvel of darns as the piece of carpet?'

'I am afraid Mrs. Crewe is not much better off than ourselves,' returned Laura, looking round with a slight not unkindly smile; 'but everything is very clean, and she has given us a friendly welcome. Dear Winnie, I have put things a little in their places, and I feel I must lie down. You will find our best dresses in the hanging cupboard by the fireplace—we cannot wear these till they are well brushed; they are so full of dust.'

'Certainly not,' said Winnie, who was always ready to put on her best on the smallest provocation. 'And as I am not a bit tired, I will write to Elise von Eichwald, while you rest, you dear old thing—we promised to let her know all about our journey.'

'And Mrs. Macdonald too—do not forget her,' murmured Laura, laying her weary head on the pillow.

Soon the swift scratching of Winnie's pen grew fainter and fainter, and sleep came, bringing a respite from the anxieties and responsibilities it was her destiny to endure.

# BELGRAVIA.

FEBRUARY 1882.

## All Sorts and Conditions of Men:

### AN IMPOSSIBLE STORY.

BY WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE,

*Authors of 'Ready-money Mortiboy,' 'The Golden Butterfly,' 'The Chaplain of the Fleet,' etc. etc. etc.*

## CHAPTER III.

### ONLY A DRESSMAKER.

HARRY GOSLETT returned to the boarding-house that evening, in a mood of profound dejection; he had spent a few hours with certain cousins, whose acquaintance he was endeavouring to make. 'Hitherto,' he said, writing to Lord Jocelyn, 'the soil seems hardly worth cultivating.' In this he spoke hastily, because every man's mind is worth cultivating as soon as you find out the things best fitted to grow in it. But some minds will only grow turnips, while others will produce the finest strawberries.

The cousins, for their part, did not, as yet, take to the new arrival, whom they found difficult to understand—his speech was strange, his manner stranger: these peculiarities, they thought in their ignorance, were due to residence in the United States, where Harry had found it expedient to place most of his previous years. Conversation was difficult between two rather jealous workmen and a brother artisan, who greatly resembled the typical Swell—an object of profound dislike and suspicion to the working classes.

He had now spent some three weeks among his kinsfolk. He brought with him some curiosity, but little enthusiasm. At first he was interested and amused; rapidly he became bored and disgusted; for as yet he saw only the outside of things. There was an uncle, Mr. Benjamin Bunker, the study of whom, regarded as anybody else's uncle, would have been pleasant. Considered as

his own connection by marriage—Benjamin and the late Serjeant Goslett having married sisters—he was too much inclined to be ashamed of him. The two cousins seemed to him—as yet he knew them very little—a pair of sulky, ill-bred young men, who had taken two opposite lines, neither of which was good for social intercourse. The people of the boarding-house continued to amuse him, partly because they were in a way afraid of him. As for the place—he looked about him, standing at the north entrance of Stepney Green—on the left hand, the Whitechapel Road; behind him, Stepney, Limehouse, St. George's in the East, Poplar and Shadwell; on the right, the Mile End Road, leading to Bow and Stratford; before him, Ford, Hackney, Bethnal Green. Mile upon mile of streets with houses—small, mean, and monotonous houses; the people living the same mean and monotonous lives, all after the same model. In his ignorance he pitied and despised those people, not knowing how rich and full any life may be made, whatever the surroundings, and even without the gracious influences of Art. Under the influence of this pity and contempt, when he returned in the evening at half-past nine, he felt himself for the first time in his life run very low down indeed.

The aspect of the room was not calculated to cheer him up. It was lit with a mean two-jet gas burner; the dingy curtain wanted looping up, the furniture looked more common and mean than usual. Yet, as he stood in the doorway, he became conscious of a change.

The boarders were all sitting there, just as usual, and the supper cloth was removed; Mr. Maliphant had his long pipe fixed in the corner of his mouth, but he held it there with an appearance of constraint, and he had let it go out. Mr. Josephus Coppin sat in the corner in which he always put himself, so as to be out of everybody's way; also with a pipe in his hand, unlighted. Daniel Fagg had his Hebrew Bible spread out before him, and his Dictionary, and his copy of the Authorized Version—which he used, as he would carefully explain, not for what schoolboys call a crib, but for purpose of comparison. This was very grand! A man who can read Hebrew at all inspires one with confidence; but the fact is the more important when it is connected with a discovery; and to compare Versions—one's own with the collected wisdom of a Royal Commission—is a very grand thing indeed. But to-night he sat with his head in his hands, and his sandy hair pushed back, looking straight before him; and Mrs. Bormalack was graced in her best black silk dress, and 'the decanters' were proudly placed upon the table with rum, gin, and brandy in them, and beside them stood the tumblers, hot water, cold water, lemons and spoons,

in the most genteel way. The representative of the Upper House, who did not take spirits and water, sat calmly dignified in his arm-chair by the fireplace, and in front of him, on the other side, sat his wife, with black thread mittens drawn tightly over her little hands and thin arms, bolt upright, and conscious of her rank. All appeared to be silent, but that was their custom, and all, which was not their custom, wore an unaccustomed air of company manners which was very beautiful to see.

Harry, looking about him, perplexed at these phenomena, presently observed that the eyes of all, except those of Daniel Fagg, were fixed in one direction; and that the reason why Mr. Maliphant held an unlighted pipe in his mouth, and Josephus one in his hand, and that Daniel was not reading, and that his lordship looked so full of dignity, and that ardent spirits were abroad, was nothing less than the presence of a young lady.

In such a house, and, in fact, all round Stepney Green, the word 'lady' is generally used in a broad and catholic spirit; but in this case Harry unconsciously used it in the narrow, prejudiced, one-sided sense peculiar to Western longitudes. And it was so surprising to think of a young lady in connection with Bormalack's, that he gasped and caught his breath. And then Mrs. Bormalack presented him to the new arrival in her best manner. 'Our youngest!' she said, as if he had been a son of the house—'our youngest and last—the sprightly Mr. Goslett. This is Miss Kennedy, and I hope—I'm sure—that you two will get to be friendly with one another, not to speak of keeping company, which is early days yet for prophecies.'

Harry bowed in his most superior style. What on earth, he thought again, did a young lady want at Stepney Green?

She had the carriage and the manner of a lady; she was quite simply dressed in a black Cashmere; she wore a red ribbon round her white throat, and had white cuffs. A lady—unmistakably a lady; also young and beautiful, with great brown eyes, which met his own frankly, and with a certain look of surprise which seemed an answer to his own.

'Our handsome young cabinet-maker, Miss Kennedy,' went on the landlady—Harry wondered whether it was worse to be described as sprightly than as handsome, and which adjective was likely to produce the more unfavourable impression on a young lady—'is wishful to establish himself in a genteel way of business, like yourself.'

'When I was in the dressmaking line,' observed her ladyship, 'I stayed at home with mother and Aunt Keziah. It was not thought right in Canaan City for young women to go

about setting up shops by themselves. Not that I say you are wrong, Miss Kennedy, but London ways are not New Hampshire ways.'

Miss Kennedy murmured something softly, and looked again at the handsome cabinet-maker, who was still blushing with indignation and shame at Mrs. Bormalack's adjectives, and ready to blush again on recovery to think that he was so absurd as to feel any shame about so trifling a matter. Still, every young man likes to appear in a good light in the presence of beauty.

The young lady, then, was only a dressmaker. For the moment she dropped a little in his esteem, which comes of our artificial and conventional education; because—Why not a dressmaker? Then she rose again, because—WHAT a dressmaker! Could there be many such in Stepney? If so, how was it that poets, novelists, painters, and idle young men did not flock to so richly endowed a district? In this unexpected manner does nature offer compensations. Harry also observed with satisfaction the novel presence of a newly arrived piano, which could belong to no other than the new-comer; and finding that the conversation showed no signs of brightening, he ventured to ask Miss Kennedy if she would play to them.

Now, when she began to play, a certain magic of the music fell upon them all, affecting everyone differently. Such is the power of music, and thus diverse is it in its operation. As for his lordship, he sat nodding his head and twinkling his eyes and smiling sweetly, because he was in imagination sitting among his Peers in the Upper House with a crown of gold and a robe of fur, and all his friends of Canaan City, brought across the Atlantic at his own expense for this very purpose, were watching him with envy and admiration from the gallery. Among them was Aurelia Tucker, the scoffer and thrower of cold water. And her ladyship sat beating time with head and hand, thinking how the family estates would probably be restored, with the title, by the Queen. She had great ideas on the Royal Prerogative, and had indeed been accustomed to think in the old days that Englishmen go about in continual terror lest her Majesty, in the exercise of this Prerogative, should order their heads to be removed. This gracious vision, due entirely to the music, showed her in a stately garden entertaining Aurelia Tucker and other friends whom she, like her husband, had imported from Canaan City for the purpose of exhibiting the new greatness. And Aurelia was green with envy, though she wore her best black silk dress.

The other boarders were differently affected. The melancholy Josephus leant his head upon his hand, and saw himself in imagina-

tion the Head Brewer, as he might have been, but for the misfortune of his early youth. Head Brewer to the Firm of Messenger, Marsden, and Company! What a position!

Daniel Fagg, for his part, was dreaming of the day when his Discovery was to be received by all and adequately rewarded. He anticipated the congratulations of his friends in Australia, and stood on deck in port surrounded by the crowd, who shook his hand and cheered him, in good Australian fashion, as Daniel the Great, Daniel the Scourge of Scholars, Daniel the Prophet—a second Daniel. The Professor took advantage of this general rapture or abstraction from earthly things to lay the plans for a *grand coup* in legerdemain, a new experiment, which should astonish everybody. This he afterwards carried through with success.

Mrs. Bormalack, for her part, filled and slowly drank a large tumbler of hot brandy and water. When she had finished it she wiped away a tear. Probably, stimulated by the brandy, which is a sentimental spirit, she was thinking of her late husband, Collector for the Brewery, who was himself romantically fond of brandy and water, and came to an early end in consequence of over-rating his powers of consumption.

Mr. Maliphant winked his eyes, rolled his head, rubbed his hands, and laughed joyously, but in silence. Why, one knows not. When the music finished, he whispered to Daniel Fagg. 'No,' he said, 'this is the third time in the year that you have asked leave to bury your mother. Make it your grandmother, young man.' Then he laughed again, and said that he had been with Walker in Nicaragua. Harry heard this communication, and the attempt to fill up the story from these two fragments afterwards gave him nightmare.

Miss Kennedy played a gavotte, and then another, and then a sonata. Perhaps it is the character of this kind of music to call up pleasant and joyous thoughts; certainly there is much music, loved greatly by some people, which makes us sad, notably the strains sung at places of popular resort. They probably become favourites because they sadden so much. Who would not shed tears on hearing 'Tommy Dodd?'

She played without music, gracefully, easily, and with expression. While she played Harry sat beside the piano, still wondering on the same theme. She, a Stepney dressmaker! Who, in this region, could have taught her that touch? She 'wishful to establish herself in a genteel way of business'? Was art, then, permeating downwards so rapidly? Were the people just above the masses, the second or third stratum of the social pyramid, taught music, and in such a style? Then he left off wondering,

and fell to the blissful contemplation of a beautiful woman playing beautiful music. This is an occupation always delightful to young Englishmen, and it does equal credit to their heads and to their hearts that they never tire of so harmless an amusement. When she finished playing, everybody descended to earth, so to speak.

The noble pair remembered that their work was still before them—all to do: one of them thought, with a pang, about the drawing of the Case, and wished he had not gone to sleep in the morning.

The clerk in the Brewery awoke to the recollection of his thirty shillings a week, and reflected that the weather was such as to necessitate a pair of boots which had soles.

The learned Daniel Fagg bethought him once more of his poverty and the increasing difficulty of getting subscribers, and the undisguised contempt with which the head of the Egyptian Department had that morning received him.

Mr. Maliphant left off laughing, and shook his puckered old face with a little astonishment that he had been so moved.

Said the Professor, breaking the silence:

'I like the music to go on, so long as no patter is wanted. They listen to music if it's lively, and it prevents 'em from looking round and getting suspicious. You haven't got an egg upon you, Mrs. Bormalack, have you? Dear me, one in your lap! Actually in a lady's lap! A common egg, one of our "selected," at tenpence the dozen. Ah! In your lap, too! How very injudicious! You might have dropped it, and broken it. Perhaps, Miss, you wouldn't mind obliging once more with "Tommy, make room for your uncle" or "Over the garden wall," if you please.'

Miss Kennedy did not know either of these airs, but she laughed and said she would play something lively, while the Professor went on with his trick. First, he drew all eyes to meet his own like a fascinating constrictor, and then he began to 'palm' the egg in the most surprising manner. After many adventures it was ultimately found in Daniel Fagg's coat pocket. Then the Professor smiled, bowed, and spread out his hands as if to show the purity and honesty of his conjuring.

'You play very well,' said Harry, to Miss Kennedy, when the conjuring was over and the Professor had returned to his chair and his nightly occupation with a pencil, a piece of paper, and a book.

'Can you play?'

'I fiddle a little. If you will allow me, we will try some evening a duet together.'

'I did not know—' she began, but checked herself. 'I did not expect to find a violinist here.'

'A good many people of my class play,' said Harry, mendaciously, because the English workman is the least musical of men.

'Few of mine,' she returned, rising, and closing the piano, 'have the chance of learning. But I have had opportunities.'

She looked at her watch, and remarked that it was nearly ten o'clock, and that she was going to bed.

'I have spoken to Mr. Bunker about what you want, Miss Kennedy,' said the landlady. 'He will be here to-morrow morning about ten on his rounds.'

'Who is Mr. Bunker?' asked Angela.

They all seemed surprised. Had she never, in whatever part of the world she had lived, heard of Mr. Bunker—Bunker the Great?

'He used to be a sort of a factotum to old Mr. Messenger,' said Mrs. Bormalack. 'His death was a sad blow to Mr. Bunker. He's a general agent by trade, and he deals in coal, and he's a house agent, and he knows everybody round Stepney and up the Mile End Road as far as Bow. He's saved money, too, Miss Kennedy, and is greatly respected.'

'He ought to be,' said Harry; 'not only because he was so much with Mr. Messenger, whose name is revered for the kindred associations of beer and property, but also because he is my uncle—he ought to be respected.'

'Your uncle?'

'My own—so near, and yet so dear—my uncle Bunker. To be connected with Messenger, Marsden & Company, even indirectly, through such an uncle, is in itself a distinction. You will learn to know him, and you will learn to esteem him, Miss Kennedy. You will esteem him all the more if you are interested in beer.'

Miss Kennedy blushed.

'Bunker is great in the Company. I believe he used to consider himself a kind of partner while the old man lived. He knows all about the big Brewery. As for that, everybody does round Stepney Green.'

'The Company,' said Josephus gloomily, 'is nothing but a chit of a girl.' He sighed, thinking how much went to her, and how little came to himself.

'We are steeped in beer,' Harry went on. 'Our conversation turns for ever on beer; we live for beer; the houses round us are filled with the Company's servants; we live *by* beer. For example, Mrs. Bormalack's late husband——'

'He was a Collector for the Company,' said the landlady, with natural pride.



'You see, Miss Kennedy, what a responsible and exalted position was held by Mr. Bormalack.' (The widow thought that sometimes it was hard to know whether this sprightly young man was laughing at people or not, but it certainly was a very high position, and most respectable.) 'He went round the Houses,' Harry went on. 'Houses, here, mean public-houses; the Company owns half the public-houses in the East End. Then here is my cousin, the genial Josephus. Hold up your head, Josephus. He, for his part, is a clerk in the House.'

Josephus groaned. 'A junior clerk,' he murmured.

'The Professor is not allowed in the Brewery. He might conjure among the vats, and vats have never been able to take a practical joke; but he amuses the Brewery people. As for Mr. Maliphant, he carves figure-heads for the ships which carry away the Brewery beer; and perhaps when the Brewery wants cabinets made they will come to me.'

'It is the biggest Brewery in all England,' said the landlady. 'I can never remember—because my memory is like a sieve—how much beer they brew every year; but somebody once made a calculation about it, compared with Niagara Falls, which even Mr. Bunker said was surprising.'

'Think, Miss Kennedy,' said Harry, 'of an Entire Niagara of Messenger's Entire.'

'But how can this Mr. Bunker be of use to me?' asked the young lady.

'Why!' said Mrs. Bormalack. 'There is not a shop nor a street nor any kind of place within miles Mr. Bunker doesn't know, who they are that live there, how they make their living, what the rent is, and everything. That's what made him so useful to old Mr. Messenger.'

Miss Kennedy, for some reason, changed colour. Then she said that she thought she would like to see Mr. Bunker.

When she was gone Harry sat down beside his lordship and proceeded to smoke tobacco in silence, refusing the proffered decanters.

Said the Professor, softly :

'She'd be a fortune—a gem of the first water—upon the boards. As pianoforte player between the feats of magic, marvel, and mystery, or a medium under the magnetic influence of the operator, or a clairvoyante, or a thought-reader—or——' Here he relapsed into silence with a sigh.

'She looks intelligent,' said Daniel Fagg. 'When she hears about my Discovery she will——' Here he caught the eye of Harry Goslett, who was shaking a finger of warning, which he

rightly interpreted to mean that dressmakers must not be asked to subscribe to learned works. This abashed him.

'Considered as a figurehead,' began Mr. Maliphan, 'I remember——'

'As a dressmaker, now——' interrupted Harry. 'Do Stepney dressmakers often play the piano like——well, like Miss Kennedy? Do they wear gold watches? Do they talk and move and act so much like real ladies, that no one could tell the difference? Answer me that, Mrs. Bormalack.'

'Well, Mr. Goslett, all I can say is, that she seems a very proper young lady to have in the house.'

'Proper, ma'am? If you were to search the whole of Stepney, I don't believe you could find such another. What does your ladyship say?'

'I say, Mr. Goslett, that in Canaan City the ladies who are dressmakers set the fashions to the ladies who are not; I was myself a dressmaker. And Aurelia Tucker, though she turns up her nose at our elevation, is, I must say, a lady who would do credit to any circle, even yours, Mrs. Bormalack. And such remarks about real ladies and dressmakers I do not understand, and I expected better manners, I must say. Look at his lordship's manners, Mr. Goslett, and his father was a carpenter, like you.'

## CHAPTER IV.

### UNCLE BUNKER.

'My uncle!'

It was the sprightly young cabinet-maker who sprang to his feet and grasped the hand of the new-comer with an effusion not returned.

'Allow me, Miss Kennedy, to present to you my uncle, my uncle Bunker, whose praise you heard us sing with one consent last night. We did, indeed, revered one! Whatever you want brought, Miss Kennedy, from a piano to a learned pig, this is the man who will do it for you. A percentage on the cost, with a trifling charge for time, is all he seeks in return. He is generally known as the Benevolent Bunker; he is everybody's friend; especially he is beloved by persons behindhand with their rents, he is——'

Here Mr. Bunker drew out his watch, and observed with severity that his time was valuable, and that he came about business.

Angela observed that the sallies of his nephew were received with disfavour.

'Can we not,' pursued Harry, regardless of the cloud upon his

uncle's brow—'can we not escape from affairs of urgency for one moment? Show us your lighter side, my uncle. Let Miss Kennedy admire the gifts and graces which you hide, as well as the sterner qualities which you exhibit.'

'Business, young lady,' the agent repeated, with a snort and a scowl. He took off his hat and rubbed his bald head with a silk pocket handkerchief until it shone like polished marble. He was short in stature and of round figure. His face was red and puffy as if he was fond of hot brandy-and-water, and he panted, being a little short of breath. His eyes were small and close together, which gave him a cunning look; his whiskers were large and grey; his lips were thick and firm, and his upper lip was long: his nose was broad, but not humorous; his head was set on firmly, and he had a square chin. Evidently he was a man of determination, and he was probably determined to look after his own interests first.

'I want,' said Angela, 'to establish myself in this neighbourhood as a dressmaker.'

'Very good,' said Mr. Bunker. 'That's practical. It is my business to do with practical people, not sniggerers and idle gigglers.' He looked at his nephew.

'I shall want a convenient house, and a staff of workwomen, and—and someone acquainted with business details and management.'

'Go on,' said Mr. Bunker. 'A forewoman you will want, of course.'

'Then, as I do not ask you to give me your advice for nothing, how are you generally paid for such services?'

'I charge,' he said, 'as arranged for beforehand. Time for talking, arranging, and house-hunting, half-a-crown an hour. That won't break you. And you won't talk too much, knowing you have to pay for it. Percentage on the rent, ten per cent. for the first year, nothing afterwards; if you want furniture, I will furnish your house from top to bottom on the same terms, and find you work-girls at five shillings a head.'

'Yes,' said Angela. 'I suppose I must engage a staff. And I suppose—' here she looked at Harry, as if for advice. 'I suppose that you *are* the best person to go to for assistance.'

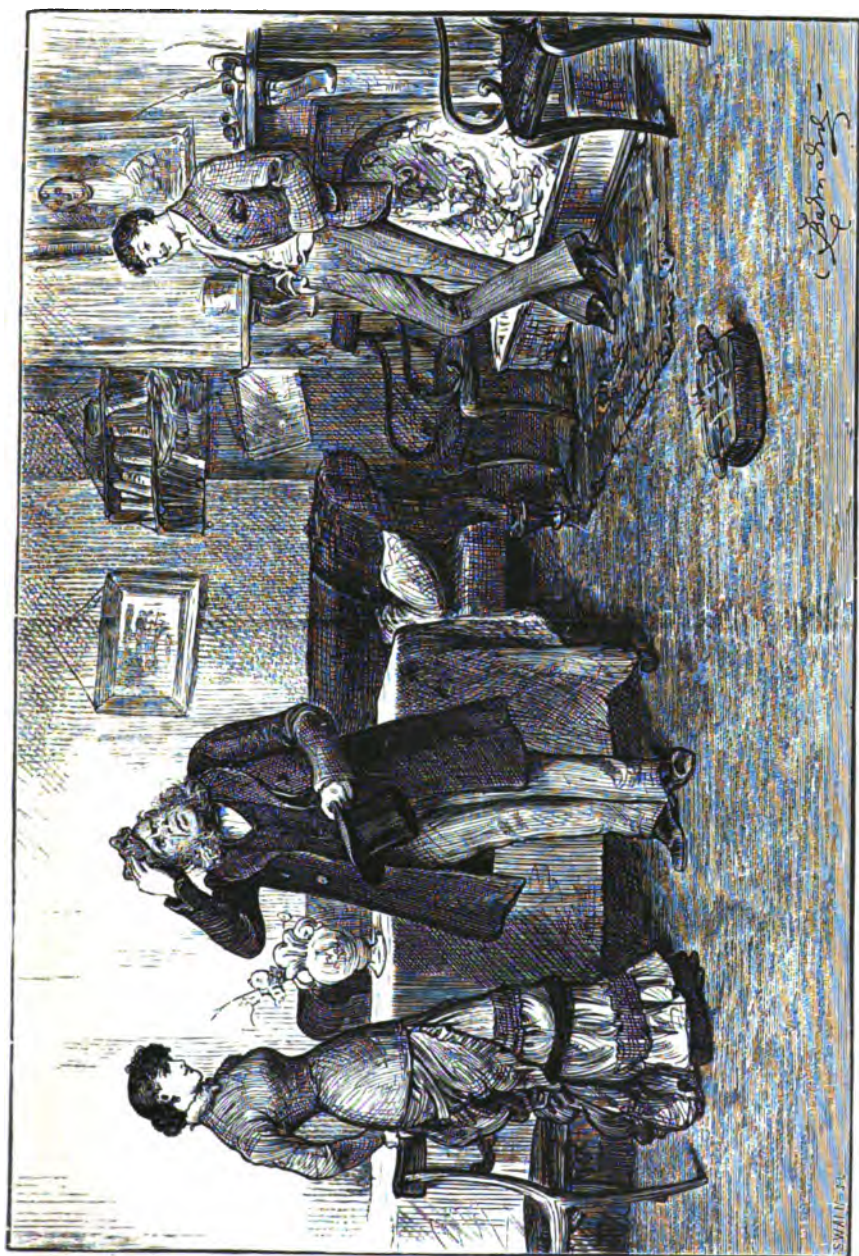
'There is no one else,' said Mr. Bunker. 'That is why my terms are so low.'

His nephew whistled softly.

Mr. Bunker, after an angry growl at people who keep their hands in their pockets, proceeded to develop his views. Miss Kennedy listened languidly, appearing to care very little about







*'Very good. That's practical.'*



details, and agreeing to most expensive things in a perfectly reckless manner. She was afraid, for her part, that her own ignorance would be exposed if she talked. The agent, however, quickly perceived how ignorant she was, from this very silence, and resolved to make the best of so promising a subject. She could not possibly have much money—who ever heard of a Stepney dressmaker with any?—and she evidently had no experience. He would get as much of the money as he could, and she would be the gainer in experience! A most equitable arrangement, he thought, being one of those—too few, alas!—who keep before their eyes a lofty ideal, and love to act up to it.

When he had quite finished and fairly embarked his victim on a vast ocean of expenditure, comparatively, and with reference to Stepney and Mile End customs, he put up his pocket-book and remarked, with a smile, that he should want references of respectability.

‘That’s usual,’ he said: ‘I could not work without.’

Angela changed colour. To be asked for references was awkward.

‘You can refer to me, my uncle,’ said Harry.

Mr. Bunker took no notice of this proposition.

‘You see, Miss,’ he said, ‘we don’t know you, nor where you come from, nor what money you’ve got, nor how you got it. No doubt it is all right, and I’m sure you look honest. Perhaps you’ve got nothing to hide, and very likely there’s good reasons for wanting to settle here.’

‘My grandfather was a Whitechapel man by birth,’ she replied. ‘He left me some money. If you must have references, of course I could refer you to the lawyers who managed my little affairs. But I would rather, to save trouble, pay for everything on the spot, and the rent in advance.’

Mr. Bunker consented to waive his objection on payment of a sum of ten pounds down, it being understood and concluded that everything bought should be paid for on the spot, and a year’s rent when the house was fixed upon, paid in advance; in consideration for which he said the young lady might, in subsequent transactions with strangers, refer to himself, a privilege which was nothing less than the certain passport to fortune.

‘As for me,’ he added, ‘my motto is, “Think first of your client.” Don’t spare yourself for him; toil for him, think for him, rise up early and lie down late for him, and you reap your reward from grateful hearts. Lord! the fortunes I have made!’

‘Virtuous Uncle Bunker!’ cried Harry with enthusiasm. ‘Noble, indeed!’



The good man for the moment forgot the existence of his frivolous nephew, who had retired up the stage, so to speak. He opened his mouth as if to say something in anger, but refrained, and snorted.

'Now that we have settled that matter, Mr. Bunker,' the girl said without noticing the interruption, 'let us talk about other matters.'

'Are they business matters?'

'Not exactly; but still——'

'Time is money; an hour is half-a-crown.' He drew out his watch, and made a note of the time in his pocket-book. 'A quarter to eleven, miss. If I didn't charge for time, what would become of my clients? Neglected; their interests ruined; the favourable moment gone. If I could tell you of a lady I established two years ago in one of the Brewery Houses, and what she's made of it, and what she says of me, you would be astonished. A grateful heart! and no better brandy-and-water, hot, with a slice of lemon, in the Whitechapel Road. But you were about to say, Miss——'

'She was going to begin with a hymn of praise, Uncle Bunker; paid in advance, like the rest. Gratitude for favours to come. But if you like to tell about the lady, do. Miss Kennedy will only charge you half-a-crown an hour. I'll mark time.'

'I think, young man,' said Mr. Bunker, 'that it is time you should go to your work. Stepney is not the place for sniggerin' peacocks; they'd better have stayed in the United States.'

'I am waiting till you have found me a place, too,' the young man replied. 'I too would wish to experience the grateful heart. It is peculiar to Whitechapel.'

'I was going to say,' Angela went on, 'that I hear you were connected with old Mr. Messenger for many years.'

'I was,' Mr. Bunker replied, and straightened his back with pride. 'I was—everybody knows that I was his confidential factotum and his familiar friend, as David was unto Jonathan.'

'Indeed! I used to—to—hear about him, formerly, a great deal.'

'Which made his final behaviour the more revolting,' Mr. Bunker continued, completing his sentence.

'Really! How did he finally behave?'

'It was always—ah! for twenty years, between us, "Bunker, my friend," or "Bunker, my trusted friend," tell me this, go there, find out that. I bought his houses; I let his houses; I told him who were responsible tenants; I warned him when shooting of moons seemed likely; I found out their antecedents and told him

their stories. He had hundreds of houses, and he knew everybody that lived in them, and what their fathers were and their mothers were, and even their grandmothers. For he was a Whitechapel man by birth, and was proud of it.'

'But—the shameful behaviour?'

'All the time'—he shook his head and looked positively terrible in his wrath—'all the time I was piling up his property for him, houses here, streets there, he would encourage me in his way. "Go on, Bunker," he would say, "go on. A man who works for duty, like yourself, and to please his employers, and not out of consideration for the pay, is one of a million;" as I certainly was, Miss Kennedy. "One of a million," he said; "and you will have your reward after I am gone." Over and over again he said this, and of course I reckoned on it, and only wondered how much it would tot up to. Something, I thought, in four figures; it couldn't be less than four figures.' Here he stopped and rubbed his bald head again.

Angela caught the eyes of his nephew, who in his seat behind was silently laughing. He had caught the situation which she herself now readily comprehended. She pictured to herself this blatant Professor of Disinterestedness and Zeal buzzing and fluttering about her grandfather, and the quiet old man egging him on to more protestations.

'Four figures, for certain, it would be. Once I asked his advice as to how I should invest that reward when it did come. He laughed, miss. Yes, for once he laughed, which I never saw him do before or after. I often think he must be sorry now to think of that time he laughed. Yah! I'm glad of it.'

So far as Angela could make it, his joy grew out of a persuasion that this particular fit of laughter was somehow interfering with her grandfather's present comforts, but perhaps she was wrong.

'He laughed,' continued Mr. Bunker, 'and he said that house property, in a rising neighbourhood, and if it could be properly looked after, was the best investment for money. House property, he said, as far as the money would go.'

'And when he died?' asked the listener, with another glance at Harry, the unsympathetic, whose face expressed the keenest enjoyment.

'Nothing, if you please; not one brass farthing. Hunks! Hunks!' He grew perfectly purple, and clutched his fist as if he would fain be punching of heads. 'Not one word of me in his will. All for the girl: millions—millions—for her; and for me who done his work—nothing.'

'You have the glow of virtue,' said his nephew.

'It seems hard,' said Angela quickly, for the man looked dangerous, and seemed capable of transferring his wrath to his nephew; 'it seems hard to get nothing if anything was promised.'

'It seems a pity,' Harry chimed in, 'that so much protesting was in vain. Perhaps Mr. Messenger took him at his word. What a dreadful thing to be believed!'

'A Hunks,' replied Mr. Bunker; 'a miserly Hunks.'

'Let me write a letter for you,' said Harry, 'to the heiress; we might forward it with a deputation of grateful hearts from Stepney.'

'Mind your own business,' growled his uncle. 'Well, Miss, you wanted to hear about Mr. Messenger, and you have heard. What next?'

'I should very much like, if it were possible,' Angela replied, 'to see this Great Brewery, of which one hears so much. Could you, for instance, take me over, Mr. Bunker?'

'At a percentage,' whispered his nephew, loud enough for both to hear.

'Messenger's Brewery,' he replied, 'is as familiar to me as my own fireside. I've grown up beside it. I know all the people in it. They all know me. Perhaps they respect me. For it was well known that a handsome legacy was promised, and expected. And nothing, after all. As for taking you over, of course I can. We will go at once. It will take time: and time is money.'

'May I go, too?' asked Harry.

'No, sir; you may not. It shall not be said in the Mile End Road that an industrious man like myself, a Worker for Clients, was seen in working time with an Idler.'

The walk from Stepney Green to Messenger and Marsden's Brewery is not far. You turn to the left if your house is on one side, and to the right if it is on the other; then you pass a little way down one street, and a little way, turning again to the left, up another—a direction which will guide you quite clearly. You then find yourself before a great gateway, the portals of which are closed; beside it is a smaller door, at which, in a little lodge, sits one who guards the entrance.

Mr. Bunker nodded to the porter, and entered unchallenged. He led the way across a court to a sort of outer office.

'Here,' he said, 'is the book for the visitors' names. We have them from all countries: great lords and ladies; foreign princes; and all the brewers from Germany and America, who come to get a wrinkle. Write your own name in it, too. Something, let me tell you, to have your name in such noble company.

She took a pen and wrote hurriedly.

Mr. Bunker looked over her shoulder.

'Ho! ho!' he said, 'that is a good one! See what you've written.'

In fact, she had written her own name—Angela Marsden Messenger.

She blushed violently.

'How stupid of me! I was thinking of the heiress—they said it was her name.'

She carefully effaced the name, and wrote under it, 'A. M. Kennedy.'

'That's better. And now come along. A good joke, too! Fancy their astonishment if they had come to read it!'

'Does she often come—the heiress?'

'Never once been anigh the place; never seen it; never asks after it; never makes an inquiry about it. Draws the money and despises it.'

'I wonder she has not got more curiosity.'

'Ah! It's a shame for such a Property to come to a girl—a girl of twenty-one. Thirteen acres it covers—think of that! Seven hundred people it employs, most of them married. Why, if it was only to see her own vats, you'd think she'd get off of her luxurious pillows for once, and come here.'

They entered a great Hall remarkable, at first, for a curious smell, not offensive, but strong and rather pungent. In it stood half-a-dozen enormous vats, closed by wooden slides, like shutters, fitting tightly. A man standing by opened one of these, and presently Angela was able to make out, through the volumes of steam, something bright going round, and a brown mess going with it.

'That is hops. Hops for the biggest Brewery, the richest, in all England. And all belonging to a girl who, likely enough, doesn't drink more than a pint and a half a day.'

'I dare say not,' said Angela; 'it must be a dreadful thing indeed to have so much beer, and to be able to drink so little.'

He led the way upstairs into another great Hall, where there was the grinding of machinery and another smell, sweet and heavy.

'This is where we crush the malt,' said Mr. Bunker—'see!' He stooped, and picked out of a great box a handful of the newly crushed malt. 'I suppose you thought it was roasted. Roasting, young lady,' he added with severity, 'is for Stout, not for Ale!'

Then he took her to another place, and showed her where the

liquor stood to ferment ; how it was cooled, how it was passed from one vat to another, how it was stored and kept in vats, dwelling perpetually on the magnitude of the business, and the irony of fortune in conferring this great gift upon a girl.

‘ I know now,’ she interrupted, ‘ what the place smells like. It is fusel oil.’ They were standing on a floor of open iron bars, above a row of long covered vats, within which the liquor was working and fermenting. Every now and then there would be a heaving of the surface, and a quantity of malt would then move suddenly over.

‘ We are famous,’ said Mr. Bunker ; ‘ I say *we*, having been the confidential friend and adviser of the late Mr. Messenger, deceased ; we are famous for our Stout ; also for our Mild ; and we are now reviving our Bitter, which we had partially neglected. We use the Artesian Well, which is four hundred feet deep, for our Stout, but the Company’s water for our Ales ; and our water rate is two thousand pounds a year. The Artesian Well gives the ale a grey colour, which people don’t like. Come into this room, now ’—it was another great Hall covered with sacks. ‘ Hops again, Miss Kennedy ; now, that little lot is worth ten thousand pounds—ten—thousand—think of that ; and it is all spoiled by the rain, and has to be thrown away. We think nothing of losing ten thousand pounds here, nothing at all !’—he snapped his fingers—‘ it is a mere trifle to the girl who sits at home and takes the profits !’

He spoke as if he felt a personal animosity to the girl. Angela told him so.

‘ No wonder,’ he said ; ‘ she took all the legacy that ought to have been mine : no man can forgive that. You are young, Miss Kennedy, and are only beginning business ; mark my words, one of these days you will feel how hard it is to put a little by—work as hard as you may—while here is this one having it put by for her, thousands a day, and doing nothing for it—nothing at all.’

Then they went into more great Halls, and up more stairs, and on to the roof, and saw more piles of sacks, more malt, and more hops. When they smelt the hops, it seemed as if their throats were tightened ; when they smelt the fermentation, it seemed as if they were smelling fusel oil ; when they smelt the plain crushed malt, it seemed as if they were getting swiftly, but sleepily, drunk. Everywhere and always the steam rolled backwards and forwards, and the grinding of the machinery went on, and the roaring of the furnaces ; and the men went about to and fro at their work. They did not seem hard worked, nor were they pressed ; their movements were leisurely, as if beer was not a thing to hurry ; they were all rather

pale of cheek, but fat and jolly, as if the beer was good and agreed with them. Some wore brown paper caps, for it was a pretty draughty place; some went bare-headed, some wore the little round hat in fashion. And they went to another part, where men were rolling barrels about, as if they had been skittles, and here they saw vats holding three thousand barrels; and one thought of giant armies—say two hundred and fifty thousand thirsty Germans—beginning the Loot of London with one of these royal vats. And they went through stables, where hundreds of horses were stalled at night, each as big as an elephant, and much more useful.

In one great room, where there was the biggest vat of all, a man brought them beer to taste; it was Messenger's Stout. Angela took her glass and put it to her lips with a strange emotion—she felt as if she should like a quiet place to sit down in and cry. The great place was hers—all hers—and this was the Beer with which her mighty fortune had been made.

'Is it,' she asked, looking at the heavy foam of the frothing stout; 'is this Messenger's Entire?'

Bunker sat down and drank off his glass before replying. Then he laid his hands upon his stick and made answer, slowly, remembering that he was engaged at half-a-crown an hour, which is one halfpenny a minute.

'This is not Entire,' he said. 'You see, Miss Kennedy, there's fashions in beer, same as in clothes; once it was all Cooper, now you never hear of Cooper. Then it was all Half-an-arf—you never hear of anyone ordering Half-an-arf now. Then it was Stout Nothing would go down but Stout, which I recommend myself. and find it nourishing. Next Bitter came in, and honest Stout was despised; now, we're all for Mild. As for Entire, why—bless my soul!—Entire went out before I was born. Why, it was Entire which made the fortune of the first Messenger that was—a poor little brewery he had, more than a hundred years ago, in this very place, because it was cheap for rent. In those days they used to brew Strong ale, Old and Strong; Stout, same as now; and Twopenny, which was small beer. And because the Old ale was too strong, and the Stout too dear, and the Twopenny too weak, the people used to mix them all three together, and they called them "Three Threads;" and you may fancy the trouble it was for the pot-boys to go to one cask after another, all day long, because they had no beer engines then. Well, what did Mr. Messenger do? He brewed a beer as strong as the Three Threads, and he called it Messenger's Entire Three Threads, meaning that here you had 'em all in one, and that's what made his fortune; and now, young lady, you've seen all I've got to show you, and we will go.'

'I make bold, young woman,' he said, as they went away, 'to give you a warning about my nephew. He's a good-looking chap, for all he's worthless, though it's a touch-and-go style that's not my idea of good looks. Still, no doubt some would think him handsome. Well, I warn you.'

'That is very good of you, Mr. Bunker. Why do you warn me?'

'Why, anybody can see already that he's taken with your good looks. Don't encourage him. Don't keep company with him. He's been away a good many years—in America—and I fear he's been in bad company.'

'I am sorry to hear that.'

'You saw his sniggerin', sneerin' way with me, his uncle. That doesn't look the right sort of man to take up with, I think. And as for work, he seems not to want any. Says he can afford to wait a bit. Talks about opening a cabinet-makin' shop. Well, he will have none of my money. I tell him that beforehand. A young jackanapes! A painted peacock! I believe, Miss Kennedy, that he drinks. Don't have nothing to say to him. As for what he did in the States, and why he left the country, I don't know; and if I were you, I wouldn't ask.'

With this warning he left her, and Angela went home trying to realise her own great possessions. Hundreds of houses; rows of streets; this enormous brewery, working day after day for her profit and advantage; and these invested moneys, these rows of figures which represented her personal property. All hers! All her own! All the property of a girl! Surely, she thought, this was a heavy burden to be laid upon one frail back.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CARES OF WEALTH.

It is, perhaps, a survival of feudal customs that in English minds a kind of proprietorship is assumed over one's dependents, those who labour for a man and are paid by him. It was this feeling of responsibility which had entered into the mind of Angela, and was now firmly fixed there. All these men, this army of seven hundred brewers, drivers, clerks, accountants, and the rest, seemed to belong to her. Not only did she pay them the wages and salaries which gave them their daily bread, but they lived in her own houses among the streets which lie to the right and to the left of the Mile End Road. The very chapels where they worshipped, being mostly of some Nonconformist sect, stood on her own ground—everything was hers.

The richest heiress in England! She repeated this to herself over and over again, in order to accustom herself to the responsibilities of her position, not to the pride of it. If she dwelt too long upon the subject, her brain reeled. What was she to do with all her money? A man—like her grandfather—often feels joy in the mere amassing of wealth; to see it grow is enough pleasure; other men in their old age sigh over bygone years, which seem to have failed in labour or effort. Then men sigh over bygone days in which more might have been saved. But girls cannot be expected to reach these heights. Angela only weakly thought what an immense sum of money she had, and asked herself what she could do, and how she should spend her wealth to the best advantage.

The most pitiable circumstance attending the possession of wealth is that no one sympathises with the possessor. Yet his or her sufferings are sometimes very great. They begin at school where a boy or a girl, who is going to be very rich, feels already set apart. He loses the greatest spur to action. It is when they grow up, however, that the real trouble begins. For a girl with large possessions is always suspicious lest a man should pretend to love her for the sake of her money; she has to suspect all kinds of people who want her to give, lend, advance, or promise them money; she is the mere butt of every society, hospital, and institution; her table is crowded every morning with letters from decayed gentlewomen and necessitous clergymen and recommenders of 'cases'; she longs to do good in her generation, but does not know how; she is expected to buy quantities of things which she does not want, and to pay exorbitant prices for everything; she has to be a patron of Art: she is invited to supply every woman throughout the country who wants a mangle, with that useful article; she is told that it is her duty to build new churches over the length and breadth of the land; she is earnestly urged to endow new Colonial bishoprics over all the surface of the habitable globe. Then she has to live in a great house and have troops of idle servants. And, whether she likes it or not, she has to go a great deal into society.

All this, without the least sympathy or pity from those who ought to feel for her, who are in the happy position of having no money. Nobody pities an heiress; to express pity would seem like an exaggerated affectation of virtue, the merest pedantry of superiority; it would not be believed. Therefore, while all the world is agreed in envying her, she is bemoaning her sad fate. Fortunately, she is rare.

As yet, Angela was only just at the commencement of her



troubles. The girls at Newnham had not spoiled her by flattery or envy ; some of them even pitied her sad burden of money ; she had as yet only realised part of the terrible isolation of wealth ; she had not grown jealous, or suspicious, or arrogant, as in advancing years often happens with the very rich ; she had not yet learned to regard the whole world as composed entirely of money-grabbers. All she had felt hitherto was that she went in constant danger from interested wooers, and that youth, combined with money-bags, is an irresistible attraction to men of all ages. Now, however, for the first time she understood the magnitude of her possessions, and felt the real weight of her responsibilities. She saw, for the first time, the hundreds of men working for her ; she saw the houses whose tenants paid rent to her ; she visited her great Brewery ; and she asked herself the question, which Dives no doubt frequently asked—What she had done to be specially set apart and selected from humanity as an exception to the rule of labour ? Even Bunker's complaint about the difficulty of putting by a little, and his indignation because she herself could put by so much, seemed pathetic.

She walked about the sad and monotonous streets of East London, reflecting upon these subjects. She did not know where she was, nor the name of any street ; in a general way she knew that most of the street probably belonged to herself, and that it was an inexpressibly dreary street. When she was tired she asked her way back again. No one insulted her ; no one troubled her ; no one turned aside to look at her. When she went home, she sat, silent for the most part, in the common sitting room. The boarding-house was inexpressibly stupid except when the sprightly young mechanic was present, and she was even angry with herself for finding his society pleasant. What could there be, she asked, in common between herself and this workman ? Then she wondered, remembering that so far she had found nothing in her own mind that was not also in his. Could it be that two years of Newnham had elevated her mentally no higher than the level of a cabinet-maker ?

Her meditation brought her, in the course of a few days, to the point of action. She would do something. She therefore wrote a letter instructing her solicitors to get her, immediately, two reports, carefully drawn up.

First, she would have a report on the Brewery, its average profits for the last ten years, with a list of all the *employés*, the number of years' service, the pay they received, and, as regards the juniors, the characters they bore.

Next, she wanted a report on her property at the East End,

with a list of her tenants, their occupations and trades, and a map showing the position of her houses.

When she had got these reports she would be, she felt, in a position to work upon them.

Meantime, Mr. Bunker not having yet succeeded in finding a house suitable for her dressmaking business, she had nothing to do but to go on walking about and to make herself acquainted with the place. Once or twice she was joined by the Idle Apprentice, who, to do him justice, was always ready to devote his unprofitable time to these excursions, which his sprightliness enlivened.

There is a good deal to see in and about Stepney, though it can hardly be called a beautiful suburb. Formerly it was a very big place, so big that, though Bethnal Green was once chopped off at one end and Limehouse at the other, not to speak of Shadwell, Wapping, Stratford, and other great cantles, there still remains a parish as big as St. Pancras. Yet, though it is big, it is not proud. Great men have not been born there or lived there: there are no associations. Stepney Green has not even got its Polly, like Paddington Green and Wapping Old Stairs; the streets are all mean, and the people for the most part stand upon that level where respectability—beautiful quality!—begins.

‘Do you know the West End?’ Angela asked her companion when they were gazing together upon an unlovely avenue of small houses which formed a street. She was thinking how monotonous must be the daily life in these dreary streets.

‘Yes, I know the West End. What is it you regret in your comparison?’

Angela hesitated.

‘There are no carriages here,’ said the workman; ‘no footmen in powder or coachmen in wigs; there are no ladies on horseback, no great squares with big houses, no clubs, no opera-house, no picture-galleries. All the rest of life is here.’

‘But these things make life,’ said the heiress. ‘Without society and art, what is life?’

‘Perhaps these people find other pleasures; perhaps the monotony gets relieved by hope, and anxiety, and love, and death, and such things.’ The young man forgot how the weight of this monotony had fallen upon his own brain: he remembered, now, that his companion would probably have to face this dreariness all her life, and he tried in a kindly spirit to divert her mind from the thought of it. ‘You forget that each life is individual, and has its own separate interests; and these are apart from the com-

ditions which surround it. Do you know my cousin, Tom Coppin?’

‘No; what is he?’

‘He is a printer by trade. Of late years he has been engaged in setting up atheistic publications. Of course, this occupation has had the effect of making him an earnest Christian. Now he is a Captain of the Salvation Army.’

‘But I thought——’

‘Don’t think, Miss Kennedy; look about and see for yourself. He lives on five-and-twenty shillings a week, in one room, in just such a street as this. I laughed at him at first; now I laugh no longer. You can’t laugh at a man who spends his whole life, preaching and singing hymns among the Whitechapel roughs, taking as part of the day’s work all the rotten eggs, brickbats, and kicks that come in his way. Do you think his life would be less monotonous if he lived in Belgrave Square?’

‘But all are not preachers and captains in the Salvation Army.’

‘No; there is my cousin Dick. We are, very properly, Tom, Dick, and Harry. Dick is, like myself, a cabinet-maker. He is also a politician, and you may hear him at his Club denouncing the House of Lords, and the Church, and Monarchical Institutions, and hereditary everything, till you wonder the people do not rise and tear all down. They don’t, you see, because they are quite accustomed to big talk, and it never means anything, and they are not really touched by the dreadful wickedness of the Peers.’

‘I should like to know your cousins.’

‘You shall. They don’t like me, because I have been brought up in a somewhat different school. But that does not greatly matter.’

‘Will they like me?’ It was a very innocent question, put in perfect innocence, and yet the young man blushed.

‘Everybody,’ he said, ‘is bound to like you.’

She changed colour and became silent, for a while.

He went on presently:

‘We are all as happy as we deserve to be, I suppose. If these people knew what to do in order to make themselves happier, they would go and do that thing. Meantime, there is always love for everybody, and success, and presently the end—is not life everywhere monotonous?’

‘No,’ she replied stoutly; ‘mine is not.’

He was thinking at the moment that of all lives a dress-maker’s must be one of the most monotonous. She remembered that she was a dressmaker, and explained.

‘There are the changes of fashion, you see.’

'Yes, but you are young,' he replied, from his vantage-ground of twenty-three years, being two years her superior. 'Mine is monotonous when I come to think of it. Only, you see, one does not think of it oftener than one can help. Besides, as far as I have got, I like the monotony.'

'Do you like work?'

'Not much, I own. Do you?'

'No.'

'Yet you are going to settle down at Stepney.'

'And you, too?'

'As for me, I don't know.' The young man coloured slightly. 'I may go away again, soon, and find work elsewhere.'

'I was walking yesterday,' she went on, 'in the great, great churchyard of Stepney Church. Do you know it?'

'Yes—that is, I have not been inside the walls. I am not fond of churchyards.'

'There they lie—acres of graves. Thousands upon thousands of dead people, and not one of the whole host remembered. All have lived, worked, hoped much, got a little, I suppose, and died. And the world none the better.'

'Nay, that you cannot tell.'

'Not one of all remembered,' she repeated. 'There is an epitaph in the churchyard which might do for everyone:—

Here lies the body of Daniel Saul,  
Spitalfields weaver; and that is all.

That is all.'

'What more did the fellow deserve?' asked her companion. 'No doubt he was a very good weaver. Why, he has got a great posthumous reputation. You have quoted him.'

He did not quite follow her line of thought. She was thinking in some vague way of the waste of material.

'They had very little power of raising the world, to be sure. They were quite poor, ill-educated, and without resource.'

'It seems to me,' replied her companion, 'that nobody has any power of raising the world. Look at the preachers and the writers and the teachers. By their united efforts they contrive to shore up the world and keep it from falling lower. Every now and then down we go, flop—a foot or two of civilisation lost. Then we lose a hundred years or so until we can get shoved up again.'

'Should not rich men try to shove up, as you call it?'

'Some of them do try, I believe,' he replied; 'I don't know how they succeed.'

'Suppose, for instance, this young lady, this Miss Messenger,

who owns all this property, were to use it for the benefit of the people, how would she begin, do you suppose?’

‘Most likely she would bestow a quantity of money to a hospital, which would pauperise the doctors, or she would give away quantities of blankets, bread, and beef in the winter, which would pauperise the people.’

Angela sighed.

‘That is not very encouraging.’

‘What you could do, by yourself, if you pleased, among the working girls of the place, would be, I suppose, worth ten times what she could do with all her giving. I’m not much in the Charity line myself, Miss Kennedy, but I should say, from three weeks’ observation of the place and conversation with the respectable Bunker, that Miss Messenger’s money is best kept out of the parish, which gets on very well without it.’

‘Her money! Yes, I see. Yet she herself——’ She paused.

‘We working men and women——’

‘You are not a working man, Mr. Goslett.’ She faced him with her steady, honest eyes, as if she would read the truth in his. ‘Whatever else you are, you are not a working man.’

He replied without the least change of colour—

‘Indeed, I am the son of Serjeant Goslett of the —th Regiment, who fell in the Indian Mutiny. I am the nephew of good old Benjamin Bunker, the virtuous and the disinterested. I was educated in rather a better way than most of my class, that is all.’

‘Is it true that you have lived in America?’

‘Quite true.’ He did not say how long he had lived there.

Angela, with her own guilty secret, was suspicious that perhaps this young man might also have his.

‘Men of your class,’ she said, ‘do not as a rule talk like you.’

‘Matter of education—that is all.’

‘And you are really a cabinet-maker?’

‘If you will look into my room and see my lathe, I will show you specimens of my work, O thou unbeliever! Did you think that I might have “done something,” and so be fain to hide my head?’

It was a cruel thing to suspect him in this way, yet the thought had crossed her mind that he might be a fugitive from the law and society, protected for some reason by Bunker.

Harry returned to the subject of the place.

‘What we want here,’ he said, ‘as it seems to me, is a little more of the pleasures and graces of life. To begin with, we are not poor and in misery, but for the most part fairly well off. We have great works here—half-a-dozen Breweries, though none so

big as Messenger's; chemical works, sugar refineries, though these are a little depressed at present, I believe; here are all the docks; then we have silk-weavers, rope-makers, sail-makers, match-makers, cigar-makers; we build ships; we tackle jute, though what jute is, and what we do with it, I know not; we cut corks; we make soap, and we make fireworks; we build boats. When all our works are in full blast, we make quantities of money. See us on Sundays, we are not a bad-looking lot; healthy, well-dressed, and tolerably rosy. But we have no pleasures.'

'There must be some.'

'A theatre and a music-hall in Whitechapel Road. That has to serve for two millions of people. Now, if this young heiress wanted to do any good, she should build a Palace of Pleasure here.'

'A Palace of Pleasure!' she repeated. 'It sounds well. Should it be a kind of Crystal Palace?'

'Well!' It was quite a new idea, but he replied as if he had been considering the subject for years. 'Not quite—with modifications.'

'Let us talk over your Palace of Pleasure,' she said, 'at another time. It sounds well. What else should she do?'

'That is such a gigantic thing, that it seems enough for one person to attempt. However, we can find something else for her—why, take schools. There is not a public school for the whole two millions of East London. Not one place in which boys—to say nothing of girls—can be brought up in generous ideas. She must establish at least half-a-dozen public schools for boys and as many for girls.'

'That is a very good idea. Will you write and tell her so?'

'Then there are libraries, reading-rooms, clubs, but all these would form part of the Palace of Pleasure.'

'Of course. I would rather call it a Palace of Delight. Pleasure seems to touch a lower note. We should have music-rooms for concerts as well.'

'And a school for music.' The young man became animated as the scheme unfolded itself.

'And a school for dancing.'

'Miss Kennedy,' he said with enthusiasm, 'you *ought* to have the spending of all this money! And—why, you would hardly believe it—but there is not in the whole of this parish of Stepney a single dance given in the year. Think of that! But perhaps——' he stopped again.

'You mean that dressmakers do not, as a rule, dance? However, I do, and so there must be a school for dancing. There must be a great college to teach all these accomplishments.'

'Happy Stepney!' cried the young man, carried out of himself. 'Thrice happy Stepney! Glorified Whitechapel! Beautified Bow! What things await ye in the fortunate future!'

He left her at the door of Bormalack's, and went off on some voyage of discovery of his own.

The girl retreated to her own room. She had now hired a sitting-room all to herself, and paid three months in advance, and sat down to think. Then she took paper and pen and began to write.

She was writing down, while it was hot in her head, the three-fold scheme which this remarkable young workman had put into her head.

'We women are weak creatures,' she said with a sigh. 'We long to be up and doing, but we cannot carve out our work for ourselves. A man must be with us to suggest or direct it. The College of Art—yes, we will call it the College of Art; the Palace of Delight; the public schools. I should think that between the three a good deal of money might be got through. And oh! to think of converting this dismal suburb into a home for refined and cultivated people!'

In blissful reverie she saw already the mean houses turned into red brick Queen Anne terraces and villas; the dingy streets were planted with avenues of trees; art flourished in the house as well as out of it; life was rendered gracious, sweet, and lovely.

And to think that this result was due to the suggestion of a common working man!

But then, he had lived in the States. Doubtless in the States all the working men——. But was that possible?

## CHAPTER VI.

### A FIRST STEP.

WITH this great programme before her, the responsibilities of wealth were no longer so oppressive. When power can be used for beneficent purposes, who would not be powerful? And beside the mighty shadow of this scheme, the smaller project for which Bunker was finding a house looked small indeed. Yet, was it not small, but great, and destined continually to grow greater?

Bunker came to see her from day to day, reporting progress. He heard of a house here or a house there, and went to see it. But it was too large; and of another, but it was too small; and of a third, but it was not convenient for her purpose; and so on. Each house took up a whole day in examination, and Bunker's bill was getting on with great freedom.

The delay, however, gave Angela time to work out her new ideas on paper. She invoked the assistance of her friend, the cabinet-maker with ideas; and, under the guise of amusing themselves, they drew up a long and business-like prospectus of the proposed new institutions.

First, there were the High Schools, of which she would found six—three for boys and three for girls. The great feature of these schools was to be that they should give a liberal education for a very small fee, and that in their playgrounds, their discipline, and, as far as possible, their hours, they were to resemble the great public schools.

‘They must be endowed for the masters’ and mistresses’ salaries, and with scholarships; and—and—I think the boys and girls ought to have dinner in the school, so as not to go home all day; and—and—there will be many things to provide for each school.’

She looked as earnest over this amusement, Harry said, as if she were herself in possession of the fortune which they were thus administering. They agreed that when the schools were built, an endowment of 70,000*l.* each, which would yield 2,000*l.* a year, ought to be enough, with the school fees, to provide for the education of five hundred in each school. Then they proceeded with the splendid plan of the new College. It was agreed that learning, properly so called, should be entirely kept out of the programme. No Political Economy, said the Newnham student, should be taught there. Nor any of the usual things—Latin, Greek, mathematics, and so forth—said the young man from the United States. What, then, remained?

Everything. The difficulty in making such a selection of studies is to know what to omit.

‘We are to have,’ said Harry, now almost as enthusiastic as Angela herself, ‘a thing never before attempted. We are to have a College of Art. What a grand idea! It was yours, Miss Kennedy.’

‘No,’ she replied, ‘it was yours. If it comes to anything, we shall always remember that it was yours.’

An amiable contest was finished by their recollecting that it was only a play, and they laughed and went on, half ashamed, and yet both full of enthusiasm.

‘The College of Art!’ he repeated; ‘why, there are a hundred kinds of art; let us include accomplishments.’

They would; they did.

They finally resolved that there should be professors, lecturers, or teachers, with convenient class rooms, theatres and lecture halls



in the following accomplishments and graces :—Dancing, but there must be the old as well as the new kinds of dancing. The waltz was not to exclude the minuet, the reel, the country dance, or the old square dances ; the pupils would also have such dances as the *bolero*, the *tarantella*, and other national jumeries. Singing, which was to be a great feature, as anybody could sing, said Angela, if they were taught. ‘Except my Uncle Bunker!’ said Harry. Then there were to be musical instruments of all kinds. Skating, bicycling, lawn tennis, racquets, fives, and all kinds of games ; rowing, billiards, archery, rifle shooting. Then there was to be acting, with reading and recitation ; there were to be classes on gardening, on cookery, and on the laws of beauty in costume. ‘The East End shall be independent of the rest of the world in fashion,’ said Angela ; ‘we will dress according to the rules of Art!’ ‘You shall,’ cried Harry, ‘and your own girls shall be the new dressmakers to the whole of glorified Stepney.’ Then there were to be lectures, not in literature, but in letter-writing, especially love-letter writing, versifying, novel-writing, and essay-writing ; that is to say, on the more delightful forms of literature—so that poets and novelists should arise, and the East End, hitherto a barren desert, should blossom with flowers. Then there was to be a Professor of Grace, because a graceful carriage of the body is so generally neglected ; and Harry, who had a slim figure and long legs, began to indicate how the Professor would probably carry himself. Next there were to be Professors of Painting, Drawing, Sculpture and Design ; and lectures on Furniture, Colour, and Architecture. The arts of photography, china painting, and so forth were to be cultivated ; and there were to be classes for the encouragement of leather work, crewel work, fret-work, brass-work, wood and ivory carving, and so forth.

‘There shall be no house in the East End,’ cried the girl, ‘that shall not have its panels painted by one member of the family ; its wood-work carved by another, its furniture designed by a third, its windows planted with flowers by another.’

Her eyes glowed, her lips trembled.

‘You *ought* to have had the millions,’ said Harry.

‘Nay, you, for you devised it all!’ she replied. She was so glowing, so rosy red, so soft and sweet to look upon ; her eyes were so full of possible love—though of love she was not thinking—that almost the young man fell upon his knees to worship this Venus.

‘And all these beautiful things,’ she went on, breathless, ‘are only designed for the sake of the Palace of Delight.’

‘It shall stand somewhere near the central place, this Stepney Green, so that all the East can get to it.

'It shall have many halls,' she went on. 'One of them shall be for concerts, and there shall be an organ: one of them shall be for a theatre, and there will be a stage and everything: one shall be a dancing hall, one a skating rink, one a hall for lectures, readings and recitations: one a picture gallery, one a permanent exhibition of our small Arts. We will have our concerts performed from our School of Music: our plays shall be played by our amateurs taught at our School of Acting; our exhibitions shall be supplied by our own people; the things will be sold, and they will soon be sold off and replaced, because they will be cheap. Oh! oh! oh!' She clasped her hands, and fell back in her chair, overpowered with the thought.

'It will cost much money,' said Harry, weakly, as if money was any object—in dreams.

'The College must be endowed with 30,000*l.* a year, which is a million of money,' Angela replied, making a little calculation. 'That money must be found. As for the Palace, it will require nothing but the building, and a small annual income to pay for repairs and servants. It will be governed by a Board of Directors, elected by the people themselves, to whom the Palace will belong. And no one shall pay or be paid for any performance. And the only condition of admission will be good behaviour, with exclusion as a penalty.'

The thing which she contemplated was a deed the like of which makes to tingle the ears of those who hear it. To few, indeed, is it given to communicate to a whole nation this strange and not unpleasant sensation.

One need not disguise the fact that the possession of this power, and the knowledge of her own benevolent intentions, gave Angela a better opinion of herself than she had ever known before. Herein, my friends, lies, if you will rightly regard it, the true reason of the feminine love for power illustrated by Chaucer. For the few who have from time to time wielded authority have ever been persuaded that they wielded it wisely, benevolently, religiously, and have of course congratulated themselves on the possession of so much virtue. What mischiefs, thought Elizabeth of England, Catharine of Russia, Semiramis of Babylon, and Angela of Whitechapel, might have followed had a less wise and virtuous person been on the throne!

It was not unnatural, considering how much she was with Harry at this time, and how long were their talks with each other, that she should have him a great deal in her mind. For these ideas were certainly his, not hers. Newnham, she reflected humbly, had not taught her to originate. She knew that he was

but a cabinet-maker by trade. Yet, when she involuntarily compared him, his talk, his manners, his bearing, with the men whom she had met, the young Dons and the undergraduates of Cambridge, the clever young fellows in society who were reported to write for the 'Saturday,' and the Berties and Algies of daily life, she owned to herself that in no single point did this cabinet-maker fellow compare unfavourably with any of them. He seemed as well taught as the last made Fellow of Trinity who came to lecture on Literature and Poetry at Newnham; as cultivated as the mediæval Fellow who took Philosophy and Psychology, and was supposed to entertain ideas on religion so original as to amount to a Fifth Gospel: as quick as the most thorough-going Society man who has access to studios, literary circles, musical people and æsthetes; and as careless as any Bertie or Algie of the whole set. This it was which made her blush, because, if he had been a common man, a mere Bunker, he might, with his knowledge of his class, have proved so useful a servant to her, so admirable a vizier. Now, unfortunately, she felt that she could only make him useful in this way after she had confided in him; and that to confide in him might raise dangerous thoughts in the young man's head. No; she must not confide in him.

It shows what a thoughtful young person Angela was that she would blush all by herself only to think of danger to Harry Goslett.

She passed all that night and the whole of the next day and night in a dream over the Palace of Delight and the College for educating people in sweet and pleasant things—the College of Art.

On the next morning a cold chill fell upon her, caused I know not how; not by the weather, which was the bright and hot weather of last July; not by any ailment of her own, because Angela owned the most perfect mechanism ever constructed by Nature; nor by any unpleasantness in the House, because, now that she had her own room, she generally breakfasted alone; nor by anything in the daily papers—which frequently, by their evil telegrams and terrifying forebodings, do poison the spring and fountain-head of the day: nor by any letter, because the only one she had was from Constance Woodcote at Newnham, and it told the welcome news that she was appointed Mathematical Lecturer with so much a head for fees, and imploring Angela to remember her promise that she would endow Newnham with a scholarship. Endow Newnham! Why, she was going to have a brand-new college of her own, to say nothing of the High Schools for boys and girls. Perhaps the cause of her depression was the appearance of Bunker,

who came to tell her that he had at last found the house which would suit her. No other house in the neighbourhood was in any way to compare with it; the house stood close by, at the south-west corner of Stepney Green. It was ready for occupation, the situation was as desirable as that of Tirzah the Beautiful; the rent was extremely low, considering the many advantages; all the nobility and gentry of the place, he declared, would flock round a dressmaker situated in Stepney Green itself; there were rooms for show-rooms, with plenty of other rooms and everything which would be required; finally, as if this were an additional recommendation, the house *belonged to himself*.

'I am ready,' he said with a winning smile, 'to make a sacrifice of my own interests in order to oblige a young lady, and I will take a lower rent from you than I would from anybody else.'

She went with him to 'view' the house. One looks at a picture, a horse, an estate, a book, but one 'views' a house. Subtle and beautiful distinction, which shows the poetry latent in the heart of every house agent! It was Bunker's own. Surely that was not the reason why it was let at double the rent of the next house, which belonged to Angela herself, nor why the tenant had to undertake all the repairs, paper, and painting, external and internal, nor why the rent began from that very day, instead of the half-quarter or the next quarter-day. Bunker himself assured Miss Kennedy that he had searched the whole neighbourhood for a suitable place, but could find none so good as his own house. As for the houses of the Messenger Property, they were liable, he said, to the demands of a lawyer's firm, which had no mercy on a tenant, while as for himself, he was full of compassion, and always ready to listen to reason. He wanted no other recommendation than a year's rent paid in advance, and would undertake to execute, at the tenant's cost, the whole of the painting, papering, whitewashing, roofing, pipes, chimneys, and general work himself; 'whereas, young lady,' he added, 'if you had taken one of those Messenger houses, you cannot tell in what hands you would have found yourself, nor what charges you would have had to pay.'

He shook his fat head, and rattled his keys in his pocket. So strong is the tendency of the human mind to believe what is said, in spite of all experience to the contrary, that his victim smiled and thanked him, knowing very well that the next minute she would be angry with herself for so easily becoming a dupe to a clumsy rogue.

She thanked him for his consideration, she said, yet she was uneasily conscious that he was overreaching her in some way, and she hesitated,

'On the Green,' he said. 'What a position! Looking out on the garden! With such rooms! And so cheap!'

'I don't know,' she replied, 'I must consult some one.'

'As to that,' he said, 'there may be another tenant; I can't keep offers open. Take it, Miss, or leave it. There!'

While she still hesitated, he added one more recommendation.

'An old house it is, but solid, and will stand for ever. Why, old Mr. Messenger was born here.'

'Was he?' she cried, 'was my—was Mr. Messenger actually born here?'

She hesitated no longer. She took the house at his own price; she accepted his terms, extortionate and grasping as they were.

When the bargain was completed—when she had promised to sign the agreement for a twelvemonth, pay a year in advance, and appoint the disinterested one her executor of repairs, she returned to Bormalack's. In the doorway, a cigarette in his mouth, lounged the Idle Apprentice.

'I saw you,' he said, 'with the benevolent Bunker. You have fallen a prey to my uncle?'

'I have taken a house from him.'

'The two phrases are convertible. Those who take his houses are his victims. I hope no great mischief is done.'

'Not much, I think.'

The young man threw away his cigarette.

'Seriously, Miss Kennedy,' he said, 'my good uncle will possess himself of all the money he can get out of you. Have a care.'

'He can do me no harm, thank you all the same. I wanted a house soon, and he has found me one. What does it matter if I pay a little more than I ought?'

'What does it matter?' Harry was not versed in details of trade, but he knew enough to feel that this kind of talk was unpractical. 'What does it matter? My dear young lady, if you go into business, you must look after the sixpences.'

Miss Kennedy looked embarrassed. She had betrayed herself, she thought. 'I know—I know. But he talked me over.'

'I *have* heard,' said the practical man, looking profoundly wise, 'that he who would save money must even consider that there is a difference between a guinea and a sovereign; and that he shouldn't pay a cabman more than twice his fare, and that it is wrong to pay half-a-guinea for Heidsieck Monopole when he can get Pommery and Greno at seven-and-sixpence.'

Then he, too, paused abruptly, because he felt as if he had betrayed himself. What have cabinet-makers to do with Pommery

and Greno? Fortunately, Angela did not hear the latter part of the speech. She was reflecting on the ease with which a crafty man—say Bunker—may compass his ends with the simple—say herself.

‘I do not pretend,’ he said, ‘to know all the ropes, but I should not have allowed you to be taken in quite so readily by this good uncle. Do you know—’ his eyes, when they were serious, which was not often, were really good. Angela perceived they were serious now,—‘Do you know that the name of the Uncle who was indirectly, so to speak, connected with the Robin Red-breasts, was originally Bunker? He changed it after the children were dead, and he came into the property.’

‘I wish you had been with me,’ she said simply. ‘But I suppose I must take my chance as other girls do.’

‘Most other girls have got men to advise them. Have you no one?’

‘I might have’—she was thinking of her lawyers—who were paid to advise her if required. ‘But I will find out things for myself.’

‘And at what a price! Are your pockets lined with gold, Miss Kennedy?’ They certainly were, but he did not know it.

‘I will try to be careful. Thank you.’

‘As regards going with you, I am always at your command. I will be your servant, if you will accept me as such.’

This was going a step farther than seemed altogether safe. Angela was hardly prepared to receive a cabinet-maker, however polite and refined he might seem, as a lover.

‘I believe,’ she said, ‘that in our class of life it is customary for young people to “keep company,” is it not?’

‘It is not uncommon,’ he replied, with much earnestness. ‘The custom has even been imitated by the higher classes.’

‘What I mean is this, that I am not going to keep company with any one; but, if you please to help me, if I ask your advice, I shall be grateful.’

‘Your gratitude,’ he said with a smile, ‘ought to make any man happy!’

‘Your compliments,’ she retorted, ‘will certainly kill my gratitude; and now, Mr. Goslett, don’t you really think that you should try to do some work? Is it right to lounge away the days among the streets? Are *your* pockets, I may ask, lined with gold?’

‘I am looking for work. I am hunting everywhere for work. My uncle is going to find me a workshop. Then I shall request the patronage of the nobility and gentry of Stepney, Whitechapel, and the Mile End Road. H. G. respectfully solicits a trial.’ He

laughed as if there could be no doubt at all about the future, and as if a few years of looking around were of no importance. Then he bowed to Angela in the character of the Complete Cabinet-maker. 'Orders, madam, orders executed with neatness and despatch. The highest price given for second-hand furniture.'

She had got her house, however, though she was going to pay far too much for it. That was a great thing, and, as the more important schemes could not be all commenced at a moment's notice, she would begin with the lesser—her dressmaker's shop.

Here Mr. Goslett could not help her. She applied, therefore, again to Mr. Bunker, who had a Registry Office for situations wanted. 'My terms,' he said, 'are five shillings on application and five shillings for each person engaged.'

He did not say that he took half-a-crown from each person who wanted a place and five shillings on her getting the place. His ways were ways of pleasantness, and on principle he never spoke of things which might cause unpleasant remarks. Besides, no one knew the trouble he had to take in suiting people.

'I knew,' he said, 'that you would come back to me. People will only find out my worth when I am gone.'

'I hope you will be worth a great deal, Mr. Bunker,' said Angela.

'Pretty well, young lady. Pretty well. Ah! my nephews will be the gainers. But not what I might have been if it had not been for the meanness, the—the—Hunxiness of that wicked old man.'

'Do you think you can find me what I want, Mr. Bunker?'

'Can I?' He turned over the leaves of a great book. 'Look at this long list; all ready to better themselves. Apprentices anxious to get through their articles, and improvers to be dressmakers, and dressmakers to be forewomen, and forewomen to be mistresses. That is the way of the world, young lady. Sweet contentment, where art thou?' The pastoral simplicity of his words and attitude were inexpressibly comic.

'And how are you going to begin, Miss Kennedy?'

'Quietly, at first.'

'Then you'll want a matter of one or two dressmakers, and half-a-dozen improvers. The apprentices will come later.'

'What are the general wages in this part of London?'

'The dressmakers get sixteen shillings a week; the improvers six. They bring their own dinners, and you give them their tea. But, of course, you know all that.'

'Of course,' said Angela, making a note of the fact, notwithstanding.

'As for one of your dressmakers, I can recommend you Rebekah Hermitage, daughter of the Rev. Percival Hermitage. She cannot get a situation, because of her father's religious opinions.'

'That seems strange. What are they?'

'Why, he's Minister of the Seventh Day Independents. They've got a chapel in Redman's Row; they have their services on Saturday because, they say—and it seems true—that the Fourth Commandment has never been abolished any more than the rest of them. I wonder the Bishops don't take it up. Well, there it is. On Saturdays she won't work, and on Sundays she don't like to, because the other people don't.'

'Has she any religious objection,' asked Angela, 'to working on Monday or Tuesday?'

'No; and I'll send her over, Miss Kennedy, this evening, if you will see her. You'll get her cheap because no one else will have her. Very good. Then there is Nelly Sorensen. I know she would like to go out, but her father is particular. Not that he's any right to be, being a Pauper. If a man like me or the late Mr. Messenger, my friend, chooses to be particular, it's nothing but right. As for Captain Sorensen—why, it's the Pride after the fall, instead of before it. Which makes it, to a substantial man, sickenin'.'

'Who is Captain Sorensen?'

'He lives in the Asylum along the Whitechapel Road, only ten minutes or so from here. Nelly Sorensen is as clever a work-woman as you will get. If I were you, Miss Kennedy, I would go and find her at home. Then you can see her work and talk to her. As for her father, keep him in his right place. Pride in an Almshouse! Why, you'd hardly believe it; but I wanted to put his girl in a shop where they employ fifty hands, and he wouldn't have it, because he didn't like the character of the proprietor. Said he was a grinder and an oppressor. My answer to such is, and always will be, "Take it or leave it." If they won't take it, there's heaps that must. As old Mr. Messenger used to say, "Bunker, my friend," or "Bunker, my only friend," sometimes, "Your remarks is true wisdom." Yes, Miss Kennedy, I will go with you, to show you the way.' He looked at his watch. 'Half-past four. I dare say it will take half an hour there and back—which with the last quarter of an hour's talk, we shall charge as an hour's time, which is half-a-crown. Thank you. An hour,' he added, with great feeling, 'an hour, like a pint of beer, cannot be divided. And on these easy terms, Miss Kennedy, you will find me always ready to work for you from sunrise to sunset, thinking of your interests even at meals, so as not to split an hour or waste time, and to save trouble in reckoning up.'

(To be continued.)



## Mabsie.

A WHOLESOME dread of prolixity, tempered by a not unnatural desire to secure my readers' immediate and undivided attention, impels me to speak out like a man, and confess, without farther reserve or circumlocution, that this veracious chronicle is neither more nor less than the record of as pretty a little love-affair as ever drew sigh from sympathetic bosom. Now, the most interesting personage in a love-story is, beyond all controversy, its heroine. And the first duty incumbent upon the narrator of such a story is that of describing his heroine in the most glowing language his pen can command. Well, my heroine's name is Mabsie. And, as a facetious young lady once informed the select but limited social circle in which I have the honour to revolve, Mabsie is 'the short for Mab.'

This last announcement may seem trivial to the unobservant, but it is not so; for it gives me the opportunity of explaining that my pretty Mabsie was really named after the famous little potentate whose coachman was 'a small grey-coated gnat.' And why not? No fairy that ever danced in the moonlight, in the good old times when fairies were as plentiful as blackberries, was half so lithe, or half so volatile, or half so delicately fashioned as she. Moreover, the circumstances under which she first became 'one of us' were, to say the least of it, unusual, if not exactly romantic; though the scene of their enactment was just an ordinary matter-of-fact apartment in the Alexandra Hotel.

To my temporary home in that most pleasant of metropolitan hostelries I returned, one evening last summer, after a hard day's work in the reading-room of the British Museum, very tired, very much bored by the perusal of a heap of grimy old MSS., and firmly convinced that the operation of dining could no longer be postponed without grave dereliction of a very grave duty. Determined to perform that duty to the best of my ability, I knocked at the door of an adjoining chamber; described my condition to a member of my family who seemed to me to be tossing the furniture of her room from side to side with reckless impetuosity; and paused for a reply. I received one, immediate, terse, and uttered in a tone of unwonted excitement. 'Come in, quick! and shut the door.'

I obeyed, of course; and, seeing three chairs and a towel-horse turned upside-down in the middle of the room, prepared to restore them to their normal position: whereupon, a grey, brown, fluffy object, with a long, grey, fluffy tail, dashed past me, like a comet, and vanished behind the wardrobe.

‘What, in the name of wonder, is that?’ I asked; not a little startled by the apparition, and very much astonished at the suddenness of its disappearance.

‘That is Mabsie,’ said the member of my family. ‘Do you think you could catch her?’

I thought I could; and essayed to move the wardrobe, which, however, proved to be so inconveniently heavy that I reconsidered the matter, and rang for the waiting-maid, who declined to interfere, on the ground that she was ‘frightened to death of the parrot.’ The ‘parrot,’ indeed! Truly it is high time that board schools were established everywhere.

Scorning the aid of so ignorant a domestic, I gave another tug at the ponderous structure, and succeeded, after much painful travail, in moving it nearly half a quarter of an inch from the wall; when, straightway, the fluffy mass darted over my head, looked down upon me with well-bred curiosity from the top of the bedstead, sat for a moment on the handle of the water jug, knocked over a candlestick, and finally settled itself comfortably on the mantelpiece. Blessing Fate for my opportunity—for I have already hinted that I was famishing—I now made a grab at the furry meteor; and was rewarded for my pains with a volley of abusive language which would have left Mark Twain’s blue jays nowhere. Assuredly, Miss Mabsie’s education had not stopped short at the ‘rudiments’ of invective.

The step from the mantelpiece to the window-frame being a mere trifle of some ten or twelve feet, or thereabouts, Mabsie accomplished it at a single bound; and, seated on a convenient cross-bar, watched the movements of the carriages in Hyde Park with manifest interest. Then I bethought me of diplomacy. My friend’s open cage stood on a table close by. I gently moved it to the window, and, while she was engaged in criticising the dress of a severely æsthetic young lady who occupied the seat of honour in a barouche on the opposite side of the road, my cautious relative and I succeeded in quietly elbowing her into her normal habitation.

I now, for the first time, had an opportunity of observing this remarkable young person at my leisure; and, truly, I no longer marvelled at her evident disapproval of her æsthetic sister’s habiliments. Her own garments were conceived in irreproachable taste, and the form they clothed was perfect. Imagine a little body, about as large as that of a fine full-grown squirrel, covered with soft fur, in which a thousand tints of grey and black and orange are so cunningly intermingled with each other that it is impossible to describe the resulting colour by any generic term. Imagine a wee face, like that of a dear little old lady, who has seen much

sorrow, but borne it so bravely that it has in no wise dimmed the flash of her bright brown eyes, though the expression of certain sad lines around her pretty mouth is too pathetic to be misunderstood. Imagine, in the middle of this little lady's forehead, a snow-white patch, like the *bandeau* of a Sister of Charity; and, on either side of her head, a rich black plume, so light that it looks as if a breath would serve to disperse it into infinite space. Finally, imagine, in place of the little lady's hands, two delicate brown paws; in place of her high-heeled shoes, two well-formed feet, strong enough to hang by head downwards should occasion render such a proceeding desirable, or to sit upon, or to leap withal over a grand pianoforte, or a Japanese screen, or any other reasonable obstacle you choose to place in their way; in lieu of her train, picture to yourself a tail, longer than that appertaining to the grandest *chat* in the *château* of the Marquis de Carabas, grey at one season of the year, and, at another, marked with alternate rings of black and cinnamon. Imagine all this, I say, and you will be able to form a tolerably correct idea of Mabsie's personal appearance; and will probably be prepared to hear that she is a marmoset—not of the common kind usually sold in bird-shops, but of a rarer, more delicate, and more easily tameable species,<sup>1</sup> remarkable for the grace of its movements, the gentleness of its disposition, and the modest propriety of its demeanour (when not provoked to put the blue jays to shame by the violence of its excretions).

Mabsie did not in the least mind being looked at. I think she rather liked it. When I offered her a piece of cake, she put her right hand out of the cage and took it, with the air of one who was not only privileged to expect polite attention, but really did expect it. And she ate her little morsel as delicately as the æsthetic young lady would have eaten an ice-wafer at a garden party. There can be no doubt that that mite of cake cemented our friendship, for good and all; for we have never, since I offered it to her, had a dispute upon any subject whatever. Indeed, the look she gave me was as good as a bond of truce, sealed, signed, and delivered.

So Mabsie became 'one of us.' And we took her down to our quiet country home, rejoicing in the possession of so delightful an addition to our family circle. Albeit, I regret to say that her reception by certain members of that amiable confraternity was not altogether such as we could have desired. The truth is, we—that is to say, the member of my family to whom I have more than once had occasion to allude and myself—live under a zoöcracy.

<sup>1</sup> *Haplorhina penicillata*—Pencil-eared Lemur. The ordinary species is *Haplorhina jacchus*.

And among the zoöcrats are certain dignitaries, who, not having been consulted on this matter, took grievous offence at the want of proper respect shown to them by their inferiors. Miss Topsy, a black-and-tan toy terrier of exalted lineage, and such very-exalted-indeed ideas of her own sovereign rights that a sarcastic friend of mine calls her 'the home-ruler'—Miss Topsy, the beloved, the petted, the spoiled, would not so much as look at our new friend. Mistress Chloe, a princess of the Pug dynasty, did indeed condescend to look, and even to sniff; but evidently with no more friendly intention than that of discovering whether or not the mass of fluff was good for food. As for Mr. Rollo, seeing that he would have found no difficulty whatever in swallowing such a dinner, cage and all, at a gulp, I thought it prudent to say nothing to him about the matter; hoping that in process of time it might be possible to strike out some line of policy equally agreeable to all parties.

Meanwhile, thinking that Mabsie's limbs looked cramped after her long journey, I took her into the dining-room, and set her free, for a run. A grey-black-and-orange flash darted instantly from the cage door to the window-curtain. At the same moment, a black-and-tan flash darted from under my chair. By dint of superhuman alacrity, for which I am not generally remarkable, I succeeded in hooking my finger into the collar of the last-named flash, for—say half a second. By the time that half-second had expired, Mabsie was safe on the curtain-pole, looking down upon the world below, with her head on one side, as who should say, 'Dear friend, you really must run faster, if you do not want to lose sight of the tip of my tail in the distance.' Whereupon, Miss Topsy confessed herself fairly vanquished; the internecine feud came to an end; and all parties agreed to dwell together in peace and unity.

Like most spoiled beauties, Mabsie soon began to show signs of a temper delightfully capricious. One day, when a lady (to whom I had imprudently described her as a paragon of affability) came to see her, she refused to put as much as the tip of her nose out of bed until her visitor had departed, when she immediately exhibited herself at her best—that is to say, she ate up a whole banana, and tore my favourite pen-wiper to shreds. She will sometimes remain inert all day, and rush about her cage in the evening like a mad thing; or be as lively as a squirrel in the morning, and retire to rest at noon, to reappear no more until noon the next day. Her claim to the sovereignty of the curtain-pole remaining undisputed, she delights in perching herself on its exact centre, and summoning all the other marmosets in the world to her

Court, by means of a cry, which we at first mistook for a whistle, though subsequent observation proved it to proceed directly from the lungs. This cry is very remarkable. Though miles above the range of ordinary soprano voices, it is a true 'chest-note.' A great musician—Herr Wagner, for instance—would describe it as the five-times-marked *g*, the pitch of which is an octave higher than that of the highest *G* on the pianoforte! The note is always the same, and always repeated four times. Then follows a pause of a minute, or thereabouts; then another fourfold cry, followed by another pause, and so on, throughout an entire afternoon. I am not superstitious. It taxes my credulity to believe that two and two make four. But, I do believe that this cry is Masonic, and intelligible only to marmosets of high intellectual culture; and I lived for a long time in daily hope of hearing some Past Master of the Higher Initiation reply to it.

Wiser than some of her human sisters, Mabsie never sings out of tune. When she is 'not in good voice' she holds her peace. She held her peace so long last winter, that we began to fear that she must be seriously out of health. So I wrote to an experienced keeper at the Zoological Gardens, and entreated him to prescribe for her. He prescribed sponge-cakes steeped in cream, and hot-house grapes. By dint of perseverance we succeeded, at that untimely season, in getting a very few grapes, at the rate of three-pence each; and, of these, she condescended just to taste one or two of the best. The cakes and cream were more successful, and have ever since remained her favourite food. She likes a grape occasionally; but, if disturbed while eating it, drops it instantly, and never stoops to pick it up. We thought, at first, that this was because she did not really care for the fruit; but may not the habit be traced to a still more natural cause? A banana, dropped in the forest, falls twenty feet at a stretch; and it would scarcely be worth while to run down after it, with a dozen bunches of ripe fruit hanging within reach. When Mabsie drops a grape, she does not stay to calculate the distance it has fallen, but leaves it to its fate, and holds out her hand for another.

Still, there are troubles which neither grapes, nor bananas, nor even cakes and cream can cure. And, before very long, it became so evident that our poor little Mabsie lacked something, that we grew quite uneasy about her. At last, it dawned upon our minds that that something might possibly be a mate. To put the question to the test, we showed her a looking-glass; and her attempts to caress her own reflection within it were so piteously touching, that we determined to seek a suitable companion for her the very next time we found ourselves in London. Alas! there was not even

a marmoset of the common white-whiskered species exposed for sale in any shop we visited. In this sore strait, the friendly keeper suggested a visit to 'Jamrach's;' where he told me I was quite 'sure to get my money's worth for my money.' So, I wended my way to the far East—not on the hump of a camel, but on the knife-board of a Blackwall omnibus—and, in due time, found myself in the famous naturalist's menagerie, where I saw all manner of beasts, furred, feathered, shelled, and scaled; but, not so much as the ghost of a pencil-eared marmoset. So I was fain to content myself with a promise of the earliest intelligence of an expected consignment. Meanwhile, well knowing that no vulgar animal was ever permitted to set foot within the sacred precincts of Mr. Jamrach's vivarium, I intimated my intense desire to make acquaintance with some of its inmates; whereupon I was politely introduced to a blue-bird, a lion, an ocelot, a llama, a mongoose, a mocking-bird, a tiger, a nonpareil, a bonnet-monkey, a laughing-jackass, a dorsal squirrel, and a jerboa.

It seems invidious to descend to particulars in describing a company so truly select. Yet there are distinctions, even among the *crème de la crème* of the very best society; and I had not been long in the presence of these distinguished representatives of the *haute noblesse*, before I found that my ability to resist their seductions extended only to the first ten members of the august fraternity. To the charms of the remaining two I succumbed there and then. The jerboa<sup>1</sup> was simply irresistible, with its pretty hare-like face, its great black eyes as round as marbles, its dainty little stilts, and the black-and-white tuft, like a bundle of silk, at the end of its long lithe tail. And the dorsal squirrel?<sup>2</sup> Well, its back was covered with soft black velvet, of a richness quite unapproachable in these degenerate days, though our great-great-grandmothers may perhaps have worn something more worthy to be compared with it. Its sides were of orange-coloured satin; and in place of a tail, it waved above its back a glorious ostrich-feather, tinted with black and grey and richest tawny red, in infinite gradations which would have defied the pencil of J. M. W. Turner himself. Yes; to these two cunning enchanters I lost my heart on the spot; and, impatient to effect their ransom, I caused them to be sent, that very day, to my room at the Alexandra, where, in due time, I retired to rest, with a cage at each end of my bed.

I dreamed that a regiment of Sappers and Miners from the Knightsbridge Barracks was sawing the house to pieces. (Pardon me, O brave Life Guards, if you can. There is no limit to the foolishness of dreams.) Being only a lodger, I did not feel myself called

<sup>1</sup> *Dipus Egyptianus*.

<sup>2</sup> *Sciurus dorsalis*. Google.

upon to interfere, until the noise of some hundred and fifty hand-saws was suddenly succeeded by a dead silence. Then I awoke, in some confusion of mind; and, by the glimmer of my night-light, beheld a million jerboas skipping about the room in every conceivable direction. Such a multitude of living creatures I never saw before; not even in a bee-hive. However, on lighting my candle, I found that I had made a trifling mistake. There was only one jerboa. But that one possessed the power of jumping in a million different directions, and staring at me from a million different points of view, at one and the same moment. His movements were so noiseless, and his long springs so inconceivably rapid, that the effect they produced was that of a flickering shadow, weaving its network from end to end of the room in chequered lines which crossed and recrossed each other so swiftly that it made one's head feel quite dizzy to watch them. Common sense assured me that five minutes of such exercise as that would suffice to tire out the noblest-born jerboa that ever traced back its descent to the days of Pharaoh Necho: so I sat down on the side of my bed, and quietly awaited results. After the lapse of three-quarters of an hour, my faith in common sense began to waver. Twenty minutes later, I found it desirable to reject all evidence save that based upon experience; and, as the result I had awaited seemed as far distant as ever, I endeavoured to propitiate my good fortune by overt acts of interference with the natural course of events. I threw down a piece of cake—some bread—a handful of Indian corn. But my enchantments were in vain. I might as well have offered a slice of cold bacon to Brillat-Savarin. Having provided all manner of meats for the entertainment of my guests, I was enabled to try the effect of a cabbage-leaf. After taking just one bite at this in passing, my friend jumped straight into the fender. I did the same; and surprised him so much by my unwonted agility, that he stood still to stare at me. This little act of indiscretion lost him the game. I caught him, point blank, and, his own cage being bitten through and through, I put him into that belonging to the Dorsal Squirrel. Quite undisturbed by this summary proceeding, he instantly began to devour every scrap of food he found in the house, to the infinite disgust of its lawful occupant, who cursed him by his gods in tones quite awful to listen to. It is needless to say that this distressing exhibition of profanity was completely thrown away. Unmoved by the muttered oaths of his irascible neighbour, the bold Egyptian followed up his attack upon the food by proceeding to demolish the cage. The one task was, clearly, quite as easy to him as the other, and his determination to make short

work of it was so strongly pronounced, that I at once recognised the necessity of keeping awake all night. It would have been a weary watch for me, had it not been so inexpressibly amusing. But, to my infinite delight, at the first blush of dawn, my tormentor fell fast asleep—and so did I. The next day being Sunday, the impossibility of procuring a stronger cage impressed me with a feeling very nearly akin to dismay. Towards eventide, however, the hotel porter, to whom I had confided my trouble, was visited with an inspiration. He brought me a huge wire rat-trap, strong enough to have satisfied the gaolers of Potiphar himself; and this, comfortably padded with tow, formed a convenient habitation from which the compatriot of the Pharaohs could in no wise effect his escape. So, that night, I slept in peace, setting all the Sappers and Miners in the world at defiance.

Two days later, I received notice of a small consignment of marmosets, among which I was fortunate enough to find a Puck who seemed to me really worthy of our pretty Mabsie. If I were only just the least little bit in the world sentimental—which I am not—I would try to describe the first meeting of the gentle lovers. But since experience has taught me, over and over again, that my pen is unequal to the task of depicting anything at all connected with the rise and progress of the tender passion, all I can say is, that the interview was most touching, and the success of our match-making experiment unbounded. The transports of the honeymoon subsided, in process of time, into a quiet sort of Darby-and-Joan affection, exceeding beautiful to behold; and the happy pair are sitting, at this moment, side by side upon the curtain-pole, nodding their heads at each other with a grave dignity quite undisturbed by the gambols of the jerboa beneath them, and scarcely ruffled even by the periodical visits of the dorsal squirrel, who runs up, every five minutes or so, to inquire how they find themselves. I am not quite sure that I have ever seen a fast young couple of the human species behave so courteously in the presence of a troublesome visitor; though I make no doubt that our grandfathers and grandmothers were every whit as graceful and as dignified. Well! I am fond of dignity myself, and I confess that my sympathies are entirely on the side of our venerable progenitors, and on that of the two tiny creatures who so prettily remind me of them, and who are conversing together, as I write, with such ineffable politeness, that I protest I feel quite ashamed of the roughness of my poor human manners. *Per Jovem!* Mabsie is putting up her cheek to be patted; and Puck is actually patting it! May they live happily together for ever after!



# Resurgo.

## A COMEDY.<sup>1</sup>

Cloth of gold, do not despise  
To match thyself with cloth of frieze.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PHILIP DORMER, *Earl L'Estrange*.  
MARQUIS OF IPSWICH (*son of the Duke of Lowestoft*).  
PRINCIPE CARLO SANFRIANO.  
ALDRED DORIAN.  
DUCA DI MONTELUPO.  
CLAIRE, *Madame Glyon*.  
LAURA, *Principessa Sanfriano*.  
LADY COWES.  
COUNTESS OF ST. ASAPH.  
MARCHESSA ZANZINI.

*Other minor persons.*

### SCENE IV.

*Salons in Palazzo Sanfriano.*

*Present: the PRINCESS, MME. GLYON, L'ESTRANGE, IPSWICH, MARCHESSA ZANZINI. A Brio-à-brac seller is showing ivories, carvings, stuffs, and a triptych.*

*L'Estrange* (*giving him back an ivory nestkè*). Mr. Brown, this is no more Japanese than I am. Don't you know that the Japanese take ten years of their lives to carve a ladybird on a rose-leaf? This is Dutch work, and very coarse work even for Dutch. Have you never learned the A B C of your commerce, Mr. Brown?

*Princess*. You shouldn't be so hard on the poor creature. He admits he is obliged to keep a heap of rubbish to satisfy the Americani.

*L'Estrange*. Satisfaction is the antithesis of my emotions in surveying his treasures. May I ask why you have this mountain of fraud in your presence?

*Princess*. Why, surely I told you. I am going to wear a Venetian page's dress at the Malatesta ball, and I wanted an old Italian dagger, and he brought me one. *This is genuine?*

*L'Estrange*. Have you bought it?

*Princess.* Certainly. Oh, good gracious ! isn't it right ?

*L'Estrange.* Perhaps it is not worth while telling you, and yet you *must not* be seen with it. It is German work ; it was made at Berlin last week. Even were it old, it would be of no use to you. You want a Venetian poniard or stiletto ; this is copied from a French *miséricorde* of the Valois time.

*Princess.* Oh dear ! and I have given five hundred francs for it !

*L'Estrange.* It is worth fifteen. Send the impostor away, and when you buy things, do ask someone who knows. It is ignorance that allows these people to flood the world with anachronisms and counterfeits.

*Princess.* Well, I confess if a thing's pretty I don't mind much who made it. Now I shall have to roam all over the place looking for a poniard. You have been very cruel. Nobody would have noticed——

*L'Estrange.* I will get you what you ought to have, if it be in Rome ; and if not, I will telegraph home. I have a collection of daggers, and there are some of the *Cinque-cento* amongst them.

*Princess.* Too charming of you. Of what haven't you a collection at home ?

*L'Estrange.* Not of Dutch *nestkès*.

*Marchesa.* I have got at home the *daga* with which Cesare Borgia had my forefather killed, after a banquet, on Quattro Capi bridge, one nice dark night. When they took him home, it was between his shoulder-blades : he dead. If you like, Princess, I will lend it you with pleasure. It is the right epoch.

*Princess.* Oh, dear Marchesa, you are so kind. But, if it murdered a man, it would be unpleasant to wear it.

*Marchesa.* Pooh ! They must all have murdered many mens if they are real daggers. How you look ! And you think nothing of staring at the stipplechase out at Albano when young Stanhope he kill himself.

*Ipswich.* But that was *fair*, Marchesa. Stanhope pitched on his head : who could help it ?

*Marchesa.* Ah, your distinctions are too subtle for my simplicity. You think nothing of killing if it done in sport ; me, I think more excuse for it when it done in passion. But I go to see their comedietta at Barberini. You come with me, my dear ; you improve my English ; your own is so choiee.

*Ipswich.* I come ! But, hang it, Marchesa, one can't talk like old Johnson.

*Marchesa.* Why not ? We talk like Dante.

*Ipswich.* You see, one can't be chaffed.

*Marchesa.* Chaff ? that means to teaze, to insult, to jeer, to

grin. No; we not do that to one another. Where is there wit in rudeness?

[*Exeunt* MARCHESA and IPSWICH.

[PRINCE takes the tradesman apart to look at his stuffs;  
L'ESTRANGE approaches MME. GLYON.

*L'Estrange.* You were sketching in the Cimontanara this morning? You go often?

*Mme. Glyon.* Yes; it is beautiful there, looking out to the San Giovanni gate.

*L'Estrange.* Can one come?

*Mme. Glyon.* No; you must be a friend of the owner. I believe there is one day in the week when anybody may go.

*L'Estrange.* I certainly do not covet that one day in the week. *Mme. Glyon*, you are very frigid always, but I want you to thaw to me enough to tell me why last week in Dorian's atelier you told me you had heard I was capricious? What common friend have we who so thoroughly carries out the modern theories of friendship as to malign me thus?

*Mme. Glyon* (*hesitates*). I know no friend of yours. I am not in the world.

*L'Estrange.* Then, if it were your own fancy only, what made you think so?

*Mme. Glyon* (*lifts her head and looks at him coldly*). The story of your marriage is common property. I have heard it like everyone else. If you find me too intrusive on your private life, do not blame me—*vous l'avez voulu*.

*L'Estrange* (*is silent a moment and annoyed*). Yes; certainly that very old, old story of a folly is common property. But I should not have supposed that anyone had remembered so mere an episode, and one so long ago.

*Mme. Glyon.* An episode! I heard it was a tragedy.

*L'Estrange.* Who can have talked to you about it? Ipswich?

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh no! I heard it—once—very long ago, as you say.

*L'Estrange.* A stupidity in one's life is never pardoned. A thousand crimes are easily enough forgotten and forgiven. So it is this silly tale that has prejudiced you against me? I dare say you actually believe me a modern edition of Bluebeard?

*Mme. Glyon.* It does not seem to me the sort of past that one would expect a man to jest at. I do not presume to judge you; but, as I say, the tale gave me an impression of both caprice and cruelty.

*L'Estrange* (*angrily*). I have neither in my character. That I can declare with a clear conscience. I have no illusions about

myself, nor do I claim any especial superiority of temper ; but this I can say honestly, I am incapable of cruelty to any living creature. I am even that miracle, an Englishman who hates a gun !

*Mme. Glyon.* I did not say you shot your wife.

*L'Estrange* (with a little laugh). Madame, I am your debtor that you acquit me even of that much ! My wife—well, yes—she was my wife, certainly ; but, good heavens ! if I could tell you how impossible it seems to me that such a passage can ever have occurred in *my* life ! I feel convinced that I must have read it in some novel, seen it on some stage, and had a nightmare, dreaming the history was mine.

*Mme. Glyon.* I suppose it was all so very long ago—you have forgotten ?

*L'Estrange.* No ; it is not the sort of episode that one forgets.

*Mme. Glyon.* You are very fond of the word 'episode.'

*L'Estrange.* It seems to me to describe correctly the short period in my life of which we are now talking. It was an episode ; it was not more—it was an episode of unutterable folly, infatuation, disillusion, pain, and repentance.

*Mme. Glyon.* Repentance ? It seems to sit lightly on you.

*L'Estrange.* I mean repentance of a foolish and hasty action which made me very absurd in the world's eyes, and caused an amount of comment, misrepresentation, and interference on the world's part such as I am the last man upon earth to endure with tolerance.

*Mme. Glyon.* I beg your pardon. I fancied you meant repentance for your injury of a girl's life.

*L'Estrange.* Madame ! That is really too preposterous. What injury could I do the poor child ? I injured myself, if you will !

*Mme. Glyon.* I thought you married her ? That is what I always heard.

*L'Estrange.* Well, I married her ! Where is the injury there ? I could have done no more for a duke's daughter, for a crown princess. It is that which was my intolerable idiocy ! my absolute madness ! Looking back, I cannot conceive——

*Mme. Glyon.* Is it so very long ago ?

*L'Estrange.* Ten years, eleven, twelve—it is not the length of time, it is the strange delusions which possessed me, which make it seem impossible to me I ever was the man laughed at by all Europe for presenting at an English Drawing-room a French peasant's daughter.

*Mme. Glyon.* Did this peasant do anything very strange at the Drawing-room ?

*L'Estrange.* Strange ? No ; not that I remember. She was shy and stupid, of course, like a little sheep ; but I think my

mother hustled her through without accident; only when the Queen spoke to her she answered—I suppose from sheer force of habit—‘*Merci, ma bonne dame!*’

*Mme. Glyon* (with a cold smile). You should have sent her to Tower Hill for treason.

*L'Estrange*. You are pleased to laugh; I can assure you it is no laughing matter to have such a joke as that against the woman who bears your name running like wildfire through all the clubs of London.

*Mme. Glyon*. Position seems to bring with it strange pusillanimity. Were I a man, I should not be a coward.

*L'Estrange*. A coward! It is no question of cowardice. It is the sense of being made ridiculous.

*Mme. Glyon*. Pray, what is that but cowardice? I hardly see what there was to be so very ashamed of. Your wife was a little peasant—everyone knew that. It was not wonderful in so strange a scene, so bewildering a crowd as a royal reception must have seemed to her, that words which she no doubt had been taught by her own people to say as the most perfect phrase of courtesy, came to her tongue before the Queen! Lord L'Estrange, I am a Frenchwoman, and not of the highest classes myself. You will pardon me if my sympathies are rather with your wife than with yourself. If the poor little simple ‘*Merci, ma bonne dame!*’ was all your wrongs, I think——

*L'Estrange*. Wrongs! What wrongs can an innocent and harmless child do one? She never wronged me, but she did worse. At every turn she irritated me, annoyed me, confused me before my friends, made me look like a fool—as the vulgar phrase runs. She was as lovely as the morning, but as ignorant as the little swine she had been used to drive to find the truffles. At every moment of intercourse I was met by that blank wall of absolute ignorance; she understood nothing that I said or that I alluded to; my dog comprehended better the topics of the day. She made grotesque mistakes in everyday etiquettes that were as simple as A B C. The women laughed at her and laughed at me, till I was beside myself. When I tried to teach her or correct her, she cried out that I had ceased to love her, and sobbed for hours. I wrote her little notes as to the things she ought to know or do, and she thought those more cruel than spoken words. What was I to do? I did what seemed to me most simple and best for both; I arranged a tour in India for myself and sent her to a convent at Paris to be educated. The issue was terrible; but I have never seen that I did anything so very cruel. I repeat I thought that she would be wise, and learn the sort of learning without which a woman is

a laughing-stock for society, and—and—well, you know she took it in another light, poor creature! and——

*Mme. Glyon.* She died. It was very stupid.

*L'Estrange (angrily).* You are very unjust to me. I meant neither to injure nor desert her. It was impossible that I could imagine so simple an arrangement for her welfare would be taken to heart in so tragic a manner. I was neither faithless nor heartless. It seems to me that I only did a most natural thing in placing her where she could learn and unlearn, and where she could be made able to hold her own in the world we lived in.

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh, no doubt it was very natural. I believe most egotism is so.

*L'Estrange.* How was it egotism? It was for the poor child's own good.

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh, of course; only it seems that she was too stupid to appreciate it. You know women are foolish; they expect love to endure: they are ready to sacrifice themselves, and so fancy men will do the same. They are tragic, as you say, and take things *au grand sérieux*. Of course your wife ought to have appreciated your excellent intentions, and understood your susceptibilities, which she was so perpetually and unconsciously outraging. She should have had no such false sentiment as her own pride and her own affections. I quite see from your point of view that she must have been irritating and wearisome—most irritating, most wearisome. But why would you marry her?

*L'Estrange.* She was very beautiful, and I—I have said I was foolish to an incomprehensible degree, and I had at the time all sorts of romantic notions as to my wife being unspotted by the world, and moulded to my hand, and all that kind of thing. It is twelve years ago. Looking back at it, I cannot now understand how I came to commit such an unutterable insanity.

*Mme. Glyon.* All your pity is evidently for yourself. And yet—she *did* die, did she not?

*L'Estrange (with pain).* Yes, she died. Poor little fool! Who could ever foresee——

*Mme. Glyon.* You should be very grateful to her now. You never could have made anything of her from your point of view. She would never have been a *grande dame*; and only think now how tired and sick you would be of her! She would be worse than a Japanese *nestké* carved in Amsterdam!

*L'Estrange (gloomily).* You are pleased to make a jest of it. It is not one to me. She was full of promise; her mind was delicate and lofty; her natural grace was great: with culture——

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh no, believe me, she would always have said

'*Merci, ma bonne dame!*' somehow or other, or its equivalent, and disgraced you.

*L'Estrange.* She disgraces me now, I see, in your eyes! You evidently believe that I behaved abominably and cruelly to her, while in truth I had no other thought but to make her fit——

*Mme. Glyon.* For you and your exalted station!

*L'Estrange.* Madame! I am not a cad!

*Mme. Glyon.* No; you are an accomplished gentleman and a man of the world; but for those very reasons you only considered yourself. And since you have brought on this conversation of your own will, will you not confess now, that in your shame of her, and your want of courage in supporting her and the world's laughter, there was an element of—of—do not murder me!—of snobbishness?

[*L'ESTRANGE grows red and rises in silence. MME. GLYON pours herself some tea.*

*The Princess (approaching).* How very angry you look, Lord L'Estrange! What has my friend been saying to you?

*L'Estrange.* That which is the one unpardonable sin, Princess—a truth! Your dagger shall be here as quickly as a telegram can summon it; and, for heaven's sake, have nothing more to do with *bric-à-brac* Brown Mesdames, I must leave you. There is a terrible dinner for the Grand Duke to-night that I shall be late for—a man-dinner of all horror!

[*He shakes hands with the PRINCESS; bows to MME. GLYON, and goes out.*

*Princess (to MME. GLYON).* What did you say to him?

*Mme. Glyon (rising and putting down her cup).* He would speak of his marriage. I tried to avoid it, but he would continue the subject. Then I told him home-truths that stung him. Oh, my dear, that I should have worshipped the ground that man trod on! He is worse even than I thought! so poor a spirit, so miserable and petty a pride! He owns he separated himself from—from his wife, because she offended his taste in conventional things and got him ridiculed before conventional society. He cited, as though it were some treason, some great crime, that one poor little fault of '*Merci, ma bonne dame!*' to the Queen of England. It is cowardly; it is contemptible; it is vile!

*Princess.* But, my dear, you knew all this.

*Mme. Glyon.* I knew it in a measure. I knew that he sent me to the convent because I did not content him. But who would have thought that after twelve long years these miserable little mistakes would live in his memory as gigantic sins? Who would have dreamt that when he thinks her dead—dead—the creature he once loved—he would have no remembrance left but for her sins

of omission and commission against the trumpety bye-laws of a worthless world?

*Princess.* Oh, dear Claire! It is always so. A glove that does not fit her rankles in a man's mind against a woman when he has forgotten all about her lie, her treachery, or her meanness. They would sooner, if they could, take you into the Divorce Court because you freckle, than because you have spent a fortnight at Monte Carlo with someone else. That is a man all over. Talk of our love of trifles! Why, it is nothing to theirs. If we have London shoes on instead of Paris ones, they know it!

*Mme. Glyon.* Yes; the fools do, the *gommeux* do; but he is neither. He has intellect, character, and high culture; he had a heart, too—once; and he seemed the very soul of chivalry. And yet, so has the world eaten into him, so has the false code of society bound him to it, that he justifies his conduct—justifies it!—because I, only three months from my vineyards and my cabbage-field, taken to that bewildering dazzling crowd of the Queen's Drawing-room, frightened by his mother, who awed and hated me; forgot the lesson I had learned by heart, and when I came before the throne, and the kind voice of the royal lady said kind words to me, I stammered out the old phrase of my babyhood, '*Merci, ma bonne dame!*' Yes, I had been taught to say that when I was a little child, if any gentlewoman gave me sweetmeats or centimes, and I disgraced him with it there, and all the London clubs laughed at him! And to this day, though twelve long years have passed, it is terrible to him, and unpardonable still. What do you call that? I call it petty pride, poltroonery, snobbism—the sign of a trivial nature, and of a poor base mind!

*Princess.* Did I not always say his must be?

*Mme. Glyon.* But his was not! I repeat, he had a noble character, and a fine intelligence. He was spoilt by the world's adulation, perhaps, and by a foolish and arrogant mother; but he had a noble and generous nature—at that time. Who could have thought he would have forgotten all our love, all our joy, all our beautiful and happy hours, and merely remembered a few social blunders that made the clubs laugh? I think he does not even recollect he ever loved me! He only speaks of his marriage as an unimaginable idiocy—an incomprehensible madness!

[*Servant announces MILORD L'ESTRANGE.*

*L'Estrange (returning).* A thousand pardons, Princess, but I forgot to ask you the *precise* epoch of your Venetian costume? What year are you?

[*MME. GLYON leaves the room. The PRINCESS is a little confused.*



*Princess.* The year? Oh, I don't know. About the sixteenth century will do, won't it?

*L'Estrange* (smiling). 'About a century' is rather a wide margin. No; you must take a year, and be scrupulous in adhering to it; you know, Italians are always most exact in these matters.

*Princess.* Ah, yes, because they have all their ancestors' things hung up in their wardrobes. But I haven't any ancestors, nor any things, and you are going to lend me yours.

*L'Estrange.* I should be too delighted if I could give you my ancestors, Princess. Unhappily Sanfriano has been before me and has given you his! Well, does the time of Giorgione suit you? We will fix it so. That will give you range enough, and charming costumes; but Sanfriano must know as much as I.

*Princess.* Oh, if I were anybody else, he would be all day in the studios getting me sketches! He is busy on the Duchess Danta's costume. She goes as a sorceress; I offered him a black cat for her. Don't go away this moment, Lord L'Estrange. I want to know why you and Claire were quarrelling.

*L'Estrange.* Is her name Claire?

*Princess.* Yes; what of it? It is a common name in France. Why were you quarrelling?

*L'Estrange.* I assure you——

*Princess.* Oh, it is no use. Claire looked contemptuous, and you looked angry. What was it about?

*L'Estrange.* I have the misfortune never to please Madame Glyon. She dislikes me.

*Princess.* I am not sure of that. But Claire is a very proud woman, and she is always very strong in taking other women's parts, and you know—don't you know?—I suppose I ought not to say it, but there is that story of your marriage, and that goes against you. Tell it how you may, you look so heartless, so inconstant, so capricious. I ought to beg your pardon——

*L'Estrange.* Pray do nothing of the kind. Madame Glyon herself has explained at full length her views upon that subject. She has heard a few outlines of the affair, and this skeleton she has clothed with all the riches of her imagination and her sympathies; very much to my prejudice. She said very rude things to me; but I am bound in honour to admit that some of them were very true ones; although her exaggerated compassion of my—my victim—renders her singularly unjust to me.

*Princess.* It is not at all like Claire's usually delicate taste to begin personalities.

*L'Estrange.* Oh, the fault was altogether mine. I worried her till she spoke. I was punished as I deserved to be. We

cannot complain of receiving what we ask for, and I asked her to speak without compliment or reticence—and—she did so.

*Princess.* She offended you?

*L'Estrange.* She offended me. We are very poor creatures, and are as thorny as porcupines the moment anyone stings our pride. What most especially annoyed me was that she should not for a moment consent to look at the facts from my point of view.

*Princess.* She would probably do so if you were not present. That is just like Claire.

*L'Estrange.* I am sure she would not. She has made up her indictment against me as coldly and accurately as she would do a problem in mathematics. But I will confess to you, Princess, that the moment I had left your house I felt ashamed of my anger. Her defence, after all, of another woman was noble; most women always side with me, praise me, and tell me I did quite right; most women always go without examination against the woman in any story. And what vexes me, I will confess also, is that in answering her I must have looked a very sorry creature. All the arguments I put forward, though true ones, were selfish and shallow. She told me I was a snob——

*Princess.* Oh—h—h—h!!!!

*L'Estrange.* And honestly, she had cause to say so. I did lack courage—moral courage; and although it is not so easy as she deems it for a man to bear his marriage being made the joke of the town, yet I can fancy that to her my defence seemed trivial, mean, and vulgar; and lowered me in her estimation. She says she is of the people herself; is that so?

*Princess.* I believe she—was—not anybody, in your sense of the word.

*L'Estrange.* But she is so perfect a gentlewoman.

*Princess.* Yes; she certainly is. And so clever!

*L'Estrange (abruptly).* What was Glyn?

*Princess.* I—I really don't know.

*L'Estrange.* But he is really dead?

*Princess.* Oh, yes; he does not exist, thank goodness!

*L'Estrange.* Was he a brute to her?

*Princess.* I think her husband was—not very good.

*L'Estrange.* That would account for it, then.

*Princess.* Would account for what?

*L'Estrange.* For her violent partisanship of that poor young girl—my wife of a year—for whose tragic death I was not to blame; upon my word I was not. If I had had any foreboding or conception of the manner in which my departure affected her, I would not for worlds have left her, even though every hour of our life

together had its thorns. I wish you would persuade your friend of this. I must have seemed to her unmanly, and a mere selfish, cowardly knave; and I do not like so grand an artist, and so noble a woman, to have so poor an opinion of me. Will you be my friend, Princess?

*Princess.* Lord L'Estrange! You are very charming when you are natural.

*L'Estrange.* Natural? Heaven and earth! You do not mean that I am ever a *poseur*?

*Princess.* Just a little sometimes. Don't be. How horrified you look!

*L'Estrange.* Well, to be called a snob and a *poseur* in one day——

*Princess.* Is hard for a leader of art and fashion, and a son of the Crusaders! I will be your friend with Claire. But she is terribly obstinate, and in a sort of way she is terribly democratic too. If you were a painter *sans le sou* she would be more easily disposed to be amiable to you.

*L'Estrange.* You make me wish for news that my old abbey is gutted and the Bank of England is bankrupt.

*Princess.* Are you as serious as that?

*L'Estrange.* Quite. And I commend myself to your merciful hands, Princess.

*Princess.* Do you go to Keudell's to-night?

*L'Estrange.* I will if you will promise me the *cotillon*. [*Exit.*

*Princess* (goes to the door of the inner room). Claire! Come back one moment. He is gone.

*Mme. Glyon enters.* I am tired. Do not keep me long.

*Princess.* You are not tired, you are unhappy. Oh, my dear Claire, I am sure he is so fond of you still!

*Mme. Glyon* (sternly). What? How dare you say so? He has forgotten me as utterly as a lasting irritation and my memory allow him to do.

*Princess.* Well, you know, I mean—not fond of you *still*—fond of you *again*. Oh, don't look so angry! Do you know, he spoke so nicely about her—I mean you—I can't express myself properly; but indeed it is quite true. He says he feels he must have looked heartless and cowardly, and all that, just now when he talked to you, but that he isn't so one bit really; and he does so want you to do him justice.

*Mme. Glyon* (bitterly). Justice! You pleading to *me* for justice for *him*! My dear, I really think that even your teetotum of a mind should not have spun round quite so quickly. To defend him to me! I do not know whether it be the more ridicule or the more insult. Indeed, it is both!

*Princess (with tears in her eyes).* On Claire, I think him just as much of a wretch as ever I did. I don't spin round; I don't change—no, never—about you. But he can be very nice in manner when he is natural; and though you will not listen about it, he admires you—blindly—he is passionately anxious to have your good opinion.

*Mme. Glyon.* I daresay! Lord L'Estrange is surfeited by women's adulation, and his pride is piqued by a person who is no one in the eyes of his world daring to be indifferent to him. His anxiety to please me was a caprice, as the other was!

*Princess.* Oh Claire, you are very hard! I can't see why you should not win him again and be happy.

*Mme. Glyon.* I suppose you think, as he does, that a woman of my birth should have no pride? Win him again! How can you speak so? He divorced me when I was the most innocent thing on earth, and——

*Princess.* No, he did not divorce you! He meant to come back in two years.

*Mme. Glyon.* Two years! He makes you believe that. He neither meant nor would have been likely to return. He separated himself from me because I offended his taste, got him laughed at by his friends, and committed social mistakes every time I moved or spoke. He said himself just now that his marriage was an incomprehensible act of absolute idiocy.

*Princess.* But if he had known you were you——

*Mme. Glyon.* No doubt I should have been once more odious and contemptible to him! He admires me, you say; yes, I believe he does; but what he admires is a woman who repulses him, who is famous, who has a talent that happens to be to his taste, and who he fancies has a past that is mysterious and not too creditable. His imagination and curiosity are at work, and his pride is stimulated and irritated; if he knew this moment that I am his wife, he would change in one instant. I should be a mere awkward, ignorant peasant once more in his sight; he would say once more what an unutterable fool he was twelve years ago. His fancy for me when I was a child was caprice, but it was passion too; his fancy for me now is only caprice *doublé* with curiosity and pique. I am not likely to be his dupe twice over.

*Princess.* You are dreadfully unforgiving. Do you know, if I were you, I should revenge myself, since you will not pardon him, in quite another way. I should encourage him, and I should refuse him. For I am certain he will ask you to marry him.

*Mme. Glyon (bitterly).* Surely not. Since his marriage twelve years ago was an idiocy, he would never, now that he is twelve

years older, desire to make another that would be an equal imbecility! Remember, the voice of society is the voice of God to him!

*Princess.* But if he *did*—would you—would you tell him the truth, or refuse him?

*Mme. Glyon.* The latter, certainly. My life is tranquil and altogether given to art; his is full of the world and the world's friendships and flatteries; he has no need of any affections, they are 'bad form,' and I—I have no need of them either. Art contents me, and some time or other kindly death will come and I shall forget that I have ever suffered.

*Princess (with tears in her eyes).* And suffer still.

*Mme. Glyon.* Of course. The utmost one gets after a mortal wound is some dull drowsy lulling of the pain from sheer habit of bearing with it, and the familiarity of time.

[*Servant enters and announces* LADY COWES, LADY ST. ASAPH.

*MME. GLYON goes out as they approach.*

*Lady Cowes.* Dear Princess, we are so late and it isn't your day, but we thought we must take a peep at you, though we cannot stop an instant. Lady St. Asaph had something very especial to say to you—to ask you.

*Princess (aside).* I am sure it is to subscribe to a church, or to do something spiteful on my visiting-list. (*Aloud.*) I shall be so charmed if I can be any use. Yes? What is it? Do tell me, please?

*Lady St. Asaph (dropping her voice).* Could you—would you mind—pray do not think me too personal—but would you tell me if Madame Glyon is really going to marry Aldred Dorian?

*Princess.* Mr. Dorian? No; I don't think so—I don't know. What made you think of it?

*Lady St. Asaph.* Oh, everyone is talking about it; they say it is definitely arranged, and it would be so very—very—very—VERY dreadful.

*Princess (sharply).* Dreadful? Why?

*Lady St. Asaph.* Oh, dear Princess, you see Aldred Dorian is a sort of cousin of ours—distant, but still a cousin—the sixteenth Lord St. Asaph married a Dorian of Deepdene. Of course he has always been very strange and odd, caring for nothing but painting, and throwing away all his chances; but still he *is* a cousin of ours and of heaps of other people too, and if you do know anything of this marriage, I do entreat you to tell me the truth.

*Princess.* I don't know anything of it; but if the thing were so, what would it matter? why would it be dreadful? You know that Madame Glyon is my guest and my friend.

*Lady Cowes (imploringly).* Oh, dear Princess, pray do not be quite too vexed with us. We remembered your affection for her, but for all that we resolved to come and ask you frankly to tell us the truth.

*Lady St. Asaph.* And beg you to stop this marriage without scandal; that is the great thing to do. Aldred Dorian is so head-strong; if there were any opposition, it would make him ten times more determined.

*Princess.* But why should I stop it? Mind, I don't know anything about it; but why should I try to stop it if I did?

*Lady St. Asaph (lowering her voice).* Dear Princess, you are very young, and you have a very warm heart, and you will let an old woman, who knows this wicked world better than you do, tell you something painful—that it is necessary you should know? You will allow me?

*Princess.* I never knew anyone wish to tell me anything unless it were painful! Yes; pray say it out. I am very inquisitive.

*Lady Cowes.* You know we can only have one motive: to save Dorian and to open your eyes.

*Lady St. Asaph.* And I feel that you ought to know it.

*Princess.* To know what? Oh, please be quick!

*Lady St. Asaph.* Well—that—well, I never can bear to say these things; for, after all, one cannot be sure, and one can never be too charitable—but still, sometimes it is one's duty—dear Princess, what *did* you know of Madame Glyon?

*Princess.* She was at the convent where I was.

*Lady St. Asaph.* Ah, quite so; but who was she?

*Princess.* Of very humble birth, I believe; she never disguises it; she is not ashamed of it.

*Lady St. Asaph.* Ah, I see; dear sweet creature, your goodness and your innocence naturally lead you to be too trustful; but indeed, you will allow me to advise you—you will make some excuse for bringing the lady's visit to you to a close. We know *for certain*, on most unimpeachable authority, that M. Glyon never existed. You will understand me?

*Princess (colouring).* I really don't. I don't care the least for M. Glyon; I love Claire!

*Lady Cowes.* Ah, dear Princess, that is so sweet and unsuspecting! Of course you fall a prey——

*Lady St. Asaph.* It was Aldred Dorian's infatuation that led me to make inquiries at the proper sources of information. You really do not seem to see the matter in its true and very serious light. There has never been a M. Glyon. The whole thing, name and marriage and all, is false. She is a clever artist,

no doubt—at least, they say so ; but she is quite—quite—unfit for the honour of your affection and protection. They told me in the very strictest confidence at the French Embassy——

*Princess (rising and speaking quickly).* Then please, Lady St. Asaph, keep their confidence. You must think the very worst of me if you like, but I will not hear another word against Claire.

*Lady Cowes.* But she has an assumed name.

*Lady St. Asaph.* There never was a M. Glyn.

*Lady Cowes.* They say she has two millions worth of diamonds ; how did she get them ?

*Lady St. Asaph.* Aldred Dorian will close society against him for ever if he marry her.

*Lady Cowes.* You know, everybody knows she does not paint her own pictures—she never did.

*Lady St. Asaph.* If you will only allow me, I can prove to you that you harbour a mere adventuress.

*Princess.* Oh, please don't make me quarrel with you ; I should be so sorry to have to do that ; but not a word more must you say. You are all wrong, entirely wrong ; and as for her marrying Aldred Dorian, she will no more marry him than I shall.

*Lady St. Asaph.* So positive an assurance from you is a great comfort, for you must know so much better than anyone else. But some day when you are calmer about it, I think I shall convince you that French artists with feigned names are very compromising guests.

*Lady Cowes.* Dear Princess, you have told me yourself that her husband was cruel to her.

*Princess.* So he was.

*Lady Cowes and Lady St. Asaph (together).* But if he never existed ?

*Princess.* He did—he does.

*Lady Cowes and Lady St. Asaph (in chorus).* Does ! Then she is not a widow ? She is separated ?

*Princess (impatiently).* If she be, at least Aldred Dorian is safe from her ! You will pardon me if I ask you to leave my friend's name in peace.

*Lady St. Asaph (softly).* If one only knew what her name is ! Oh, I am so quite too grieved that I have vexed you, but really I thought you ought to know what they say.

*Princess.* 'They say' has killed many friendships and much happiness, but it won't kill mine and Claire's. Won't you have some tea ? No ? Oh, you have not vexed me. One is not vexed at what is not in the very least true.

*Lady St. Asaph (with a sigh).* How beautiful such confidence

is! But, alas! dear Princess, when you are as old as I you will have learnt that there is no enemy so dangerous and so costly as belief in others! We shall meet to-night? You will be *en beauté*, I am sure, and I hear Rodrigues has done something marvellous for you in humming-birds and ivory satin. *Au revoir*—don't be angry, love!

*Princess (left alone).* Oh, the old cats! the horrid old cats! And I am quite sure I answered so badly; and I let them know that her husband was alive! Two millions worth of diamonds! Claire! who won't wear as much as a silver bangle, and spends all her money on the poor of Paris! Oh, the horrid old cats! Poking into everybody's cupboards, and if they see a cobweb declaring it's a skeleton! I haven't told any of them any stories yet, but I think—I shall begin. Intrusion ought to be answered by invention. If only Claire would declare herself!—but she never will. Of course, as she has had the strength to keep silent all these twelve years, she will go on doing so. Carlino! Carlino! (*The PRINCE enters.*) Will you tell me one thing, truthfully if you can? Do people ever ask you questions about Claire's husband?

*Prince.* *Mia cara!* I think they do, now you name it.

*Princess.* And what do you answer?

*Prince.* *Mia cara,* I know nothing of the gentleman, so what can I say? She does not produce her husband, and I think you said he was dead; but whether he is dead, or in Russia, or in America, what does it matter? She is a handsome woman, and might amuse herself very well if she chose. I know two or three men who admire her greatly, only she has too much the air of the *nemo me impune lacessit*.

*Princess.* You would like my female friends to be like yours, then?

*Prince.* Amiability is always agreeable. I should be so glad if you would remember that.

*Princess.* I will try and remember it, and you must not blame me if you dislike the results of my remembrance.

*Prince.* You mean some menace very profound, but I do not follow it. And I do not think you will ever get out of your regrettable habit of making little scenes about everything—you like them too well.

*Princess.* I detest them, but when you insult me——

*Prince.* Ah, ah! what is coming but a scene? Rather instruct me what I am to say about the dead or the vanished husband of your friend. They do talk much about her just now!

*Princess.* Say she is an angel, and that he was most utterly unworthy.



*Prince.* Oh, *cara mia*, they would laugh at me for being in love with her. And as for being unworthy, everyone knows that husbands are always that; there is not a pretty woman in Europe whose husband is not a brute—if you listen to her. I am convinced you tell Montelupo I am a monster.

*Princess.* Montelupo sees for himself that you outrage my feelings on every occasion.

*Prince.* And he consoles you for the outrage. Ah, yes, that is just as it should be. Only, Montelupo is a puppy—a *grullo*—an inanity—an absolute ass—you—might choose better, more creditably.

*Princess (aside).* He has some decency left; he is jealous. Perhaps he will tire of that horrid woman yet! (*Aloud.*) I find Montelupo quite charming; he has so much tact, so much silent sympathy.

*Prince.* And recompenses himself for his silence by boasting with both lungs in the club!

*Princess.* And don't you boast, sometimes?

*Prince (angrily).* No, never. I am not a monkey, all grimace, like your *servo*; and I tell you now, once for all, that though you can divert yourself as you please, and have any number of young men about you that you like, it is a number that you must have, and not anyone in especial; for if I get laughed at about you, or hear my name dragged through the club, then, Signora Principessa—

*Princess.* Oh, then you mean you will stand up in your shirt with a big sabre? Very well. That will be very flattering to me. But the Duchess Danta will be very angry!

[*She leaves the room with a little laugh, and the PRINCE stands disconcerted. He pours himself out a glass of kummel at the tea-table, and says with a sigh,*

If she were not my wife, she would really be bewitching. As it is—*che seccatura!*

#### SCENE V.

*Same room, five o'clock next day.*

*Present: L'ESTRANGE and the PRINCESS.*

*L'Estrange.* Princess, in spite of your kind promises, which I am sure have been sustained by kind offices, Madame Glyon remains for ever on the defensive with me. What is the reason? Do not spare my vanity in answering me.

*Princess.* Well, I must tell you a secret if I am to answer you honestly,

*L'Estrange.* I will be worthy of your confidence.

*Princess.* Oh, it is not very much of one, only Claire would be angry if I spoke of it. You must know, then, that she and I were at the convent with—what did you call her the other day?—the poor young girl who had the misfortune to be your wife of a year.

*L'Estrange.* I understand. Madame Glyon remembers her, pities her, and so deems me a wretch?

*Princess.* Exactly. Of course you know it did make a terrible impression on all of us, and Claire being older than I, felt it more. I do not think anything you could ever say or do would change the impression that she has of you.

*L'Estrange.* She is very unjust; it is of no use to go over that old ground, yet it is strange that so serene a woman should show herself so implacable on a matter that can never have touched herself.

*Princess.* She was attached to your wife; pity is very strong in such a woman as Claire.

*L'Estrange.* She has none for me.

*Princess.* My dear Lord L'Estrange, she probably is as convinced as I am that you never can possibly be a subject for compassion.

*L'Estrange.* Be serious, dear Princess. Surely, by all I have said to you, you must believe that my admiration for your friend is so strong that it must be called by another word. Therefore, her coldness to me is more than painful; it is so distressing to me that I am a fool to linger on in Rome.

*Princess.* Oh, she is going back to Paris at *Mi-carême*. But, really and truly, with all this feeling for her, would it carry you so far as to make you commit another folly in marriage?

*L'Estrange.* You are her friend, and you call it a folly?

*Princess.* Certainly; from the world's point of view—which your marriage with the gardener's daughter was. Claire is a famous woman, but she is not of high birth; she is not rich, and the ill nature of society has touched her. You know it is like London soot; it flies about by the merest accident, but if it smudges you, the smut makes you look foolish, though you be white as snow.

*L'Estrange.* Princess, she is your friend, therefore you will believe that I would not insult either you or herself by a mere frivolous curiosity. Will you let me ask you then honestly—is she free to marry?

*Princess.* To marry you?

*L'Estrange.* Well, put it so—is she? There is a rumour, more than a rumour, that Glyon is not dead.

*Princess.* But would you marry her ?

*L'Estrange.* Please answer my question first.

*Princess.* Then, yes ; ten times over, yes ; she can be your wife, if she wish it, with as clear a conscience as I am Carlino's. But do you wish it ? That I doubt very much.

*L'Estrange.* I am beginning to wish it, passionately. I gave her to understand me so, last night.

*Princess.* And what did she say ?

*L'Estrange.* Nothing ; we were interrupted ; your rooms were so full.

*Princess.* But seriously—you do not seriously mean that you are ready to give your title a second time to a woman without birth ?

*L'Estrange.* If I be willing to dower your friend with all I possess, it is not you, Princess, who should quarrel with me. She has a grand genius, and I am sure a grand nature. They are worth sixteen quarterings. I am a conservative in some ways, but I have no prejudices.

*Princess.* I am sure you mean what you say now, or you think you do ; but I am so afraid that—you are so very changeable——

*L'Estrange.* That is her idea. I am not so.

*Princess.* I mean, you know, that when you see a rare piece of Celadon or Crackling that charms you, you bid against everybody, and would ruin yourself to have it knocked down to you. But, then, when you have it in your collection a little time, you begin to think—perhaps it is an imposture, perhaps it is not worth its money, perhaps somebody else has something like it, or something better ; and then, little by little, little by little, you quite grow into disgust with the poor piece, and would like to put it out of your cabinets altogether, if you were only quite sure. Now, one woman you have already treated like the bit of Celadon ; and, though you are so eager now to pay any price for another, I am afraid you would feel much the same to her in time, if you get your way. And Claire is not a mere piece of china ; she is a very sensitive and very proud woman.

*L'Estrange.* You have a poor impression of me ; your friend has inculcated you with her opinions.

*Princess.* Can you deny that towards your china you do gradually grow from adoration to indifference, from indifference to doubt, from doubt to downright disgust ?

*L'Estrange.* One always depreciates or over-estimates what is one's own. But your parallel is not quite true. I have pieces of Old Vienna, of Japanese, of Crackling, with which I have been satisfied for twenty years. It is only where there is a doubt that one grows whimsical and dissatisfied.

*Princess.* Well, Claire to you would be like the china that you do doubt about. If you won her, you would always be saying to yourself, What does the world think of her?

*L'Estrange.* You make me a poor creature.

*Princess.* No, no; only a connoisseur not easy with his *bibelôts* unless the whole of mankind be envying them. Envy is the mark that society scratches on the very best of everything, as I believe they put double L's on the Bourbon Sèvres. Unless your Sèvres had the double L's, you would not care for it.

*L'Estrange.* You are so witty, Princess, that it is impossible to keep up with you, and I do not want wit to-day; I want sympathy.

*Princess.* Try and get it from Claire.

[*MME. GLYON enters, not seeing L'ESTRANGE; she has a quantity of daffodils and narcissus in her hand. She speaks to the PRINCESS.*

Laura, these are lovelier than your camellias and azaleas. I will put them in your Venetian bowl (*sees L'ESTRANGE*). You here again, Lord L'Estrange? Good morning. Why must one say morning even while vespers are sounding?

*L'Estrange.* Dinner is the only meridian we recognise. I never knew why we have not called it supper. You have got those flowers in the Doria woods, I think?

*Mme. Glyon.* Yes, I have been there with Bébé.

*Princess.* Ah, my Bébé! I must go and see him. I hope you have not tired him. I am afraid he is getting to love you better than me.

*Mme. Glyon.* I shall be gone in ten days, and then Bébé will forget.

[*Exit the PRINCESS. L'ESTRANGE approaches MME. GLYON as she is arranging the daffodils.*

*L'Estrange.* Do you believe it is so easy to forget you, even for Bébé?

*Mme. Glyon.* Yes, it is very easy. Bébé is a boy; over his Easter eggs he will forget even what my face is like.

*L'Estrange.* I do not think even Bébé at his mature years will be so faithless. I wish you would have more true conception of the hold you take upon us through our eyes, as Spaniards say. Most people have so far too much self-esteem. You err in the very opposite fault of self-detraction and self-depreciation.

*Mme. Glyon.* No; I know where my strength lies and where my weakness does. I can force the world into admiration of my works, but I never yet could influence a living being. Some people are like that; their power of volition is expended on their art; in the facts of life they are weak, and write their names in water.

*L'Estrange.* You write yours in fire on men's memories. Will you let me say again what I said ill last night? Will you——

*Mme. Glyon.* Leave it unsaid; I will consider it unsaid. You spoke on a mere impulse—a whim of the moment. We all know such a whim cost you dear once.

*L'Estrange.* Can you never leave in oblivion that one folly? After all, it was no crime.

*Mme. Glyon.* I think it was one. I may be hypercritical.

*L'Estrange.* If it were, leave it in its grave.

*Mme. Glyon.* In her grave.

*L'Estrange.* You are most unjust. One moment you call my hapless marriage a whim, the next a crime. It cannot be both. If I be such a poor light piece of thistledown, I cannot seriously be loaded with responsibilities so weighty. I cannot see what that one action of my past can have to do with you.

*Mme. Glyon.* Nothing; only, I am quite well aware that what you profess to feel for me is of no more worth, and will have no longer life, than what you felt for the gardener's daughter of whom you made a countess.

*L'Estrange.* Good heavens! how shall I convince you? Can you compare yourself one instant, in your genius, your brilliancy, your fame, to that poor child whose mere physical loveliness, for an hour of summer-passion, made me lose my wits and brave the laughter of the world?

*Mme. Glyon (looking at him sternly).* There is not so very vast a difference. I am of the people. Your world, if it do not laugh at me, often slanders me. To love *mé*, a man would need to be indifferent to comment and to innuendo; no coward before conventionality, and deaf as a marble wall to the envenomed buzz of chattering tongues. Lord L'Estrange, you are not such a man.

*L'Estrange.* I could become such—for you.

*Mme. Glyon.* You think so at this moment. I believe you to be sincere. But you deceive yourself. You never would resist the pressure of social opinion. You see me through your own eyes now, and do me more than justice; but, if I listened to you, soon—very soon—you would see me through the eyes of others, and little by little you would quarrel with yourself once more for having been a fool.

*L'Estrange (bitterly).* Ah! You can reason so ably and so coldly because I do not touch a fibre of your sympathies; I do not for a moment quicken a pulse of your heart! If you had the faintest feeling for me, you would not condemn me with such chilly logic.

*Mme. Glyon (looking down on the daffodils).* I am not in-

sensible to the honour you do me, and I believe in the momentary sincerity of your assurances. But—that is all.

*L'Estrange (passionately).* What can I say to make you believe?

*Mme. Glyon.* Nothing would make me believe in the duration of the fantasy that moves you this idle Carnival time, and will have left you, as my memory will have left Bébé by Easter-day.

*[She rings. A servant enters.]*

*Mme. Glyon (to SERVANT).* Bring water for this bowl of flowers. Lord L'Estrange, why do you distress yourself and me? Go—go in peace; and when you awake out of this momentary madness, as you will do very soon, you will say to yourself, 'How nearly I committed a second folly because a woman's pictures had a *morbidezza* and a fancy in them that I liked!'

*L'Estrange.* You are cruel! You are unjust! You are utterly wrong.

*Mme. Glyon.* Here is Giovanni with the water. He understands English very well.

*L'Estrange.* But if I could convince you of the sincerity of my feelings—of their constancy—would there be anything on your side to forbid your listening to me?

*Mme. Glyon.* It is mere waste of time to discuss the impossible.

*L'Estrange.* At least do me the justice of a frank reply. Would you be free to grant me what I solicit?

*Mme. Glyon.* What do you mean?

*L'Estrange.* I mean in plain words—is Glyon dead?

*Mme. Glyon.* Were there a shadow of claim on me from any other, you may be sure I would not have let you speak such words as you have done. But these questions are very idle. Lord L'Estrange, in plain words, since you ask them, I refuse you.

*L'Estrange.* I will leave you. You will make my excuses to the Prince.

*[Exit.]*

*[She completes the arrangement of the flowers and then dismisses the servant. Alone, she sinks into a seat and bursts into tears.]*

He loves me now! And if I could keep up the comedy, he would love me, perhaps, always. I might marry him again, and he need never know the truth. But I would not win him by a lie—it would be too base. Maybe, even as far as I have gone is wrong; and yet it was such temptation to see his cold heart day by day warm and soften towards me, and his fastidious fancy find in me his ideal. And he is so dear to me—so dear! How could he not know that I resented so passionately because I loved so well! Maybe even now we might be happy—no, not if he knew the

truth. I should lose all my charm for him; he would be once more afraid of all my antecedents; he would be once more seeing the peasant in my step, in my voice, in my habits; he thinks me a muse, a goddess, *now*—but if he knew! He is so utterly the unconscious slave of his fancy, he is so entirely under the dominance of mere caprice, that when he learned that he was in love with his own wife, he would be disenchanted like a child who sees the fairy of a pantomime, stripped of her gossamer wings and golden crown, trudging through mud, in common everyday attire. He is entirely the creature of his fancy, as the child is. And I could not risk it again—the gradual disillusion, the impatience that only courtesy controlled, the fading away of tenderness into dissatisfaction, the changing of adoration into incessant criticism; no, I could never bear them now. Better that we should for ever live apart. I have art; he has the world. He will be happy; in three months' time he will have forgotten my rejection. And yet, oh heaven! how hard it is not to cry out to him—My love! my love!

## SCENE VI.

*Dorian's Studio.*

*Present:* LADY COWES, LADY ST. ASAPH, *the* PRINCESS, IPSWICH, MONTELUPO.

*Princess.* Is Dorian really gone?

*Lady St. Asaph.* Oh yes, to the Soudan. I am so thankful.

*Princess.* Oh dear, how can you be! All his delightful life in Rome to be broken up like this, and all these delicious things to be sold—it is too utterly vexing; and his Tuesday teas for us in Carnival were the very pleasantest things one had—how can you say you are thankful? and that delicious negro and the *niello* teapot!

*Lady St. Asaph.* Dear Princess, you know *why* I am thankful. A temporary break-up is very much better for him than a lifelong misfortune, and you can buy the teapot at the sale; the negro is gone with him to Africa.

*Lady Cowes.* And of course he will come back with another negro in a year or two, and begin to buy teapots again, and get tapestries together in a new studio. It was the very wisest thing he could do to go.

*Ipswich.* Is it true, Princess, that your handsome friend sent him to the Soudan because she is trying it on with L'Estrange?

*Lady Cowes.* Everyone knows that, Lord Ipswich, except, perhaps, the Princess.

*Princess (hastily).* It is utterly false.

*Lady Cowes and Lady St. Asaph (together).* Oh, dear Princess! Princess. Utterly false! If you must know, she refused to marry both Aldred Dorian and Lord L'Estrange. There! you make me say mean things—things I never ought to say—because you are so obstinate, so untrue, so unkind.

*Lady St. Asaph (angrily).* She certainly did not refuse Aldred Dorian. We talked to him—we are cousins—and he said how right we were, and determined to go to Africa.

*Princess.* As if Dorian was such a contemptible creature as to be talked to—talked over! Of course you don't believe me, but I know she refused him here in this very studio.

*Lady Cowes.* She told you so, I suppose?

*Princess.* No, she did not. Dorian told me himself. He was wretched. He will never be the same man or the same artist again——

*Ipswich (laughing).* And is L'Estrange wretched? On my word, I don't see it. He was buying brocades in the Ghetto this morning with all the zest imaginable.

*Princess.* His soul never rises above brocades and *bibelôts*! No, I don't mean that; he can be very nice, very charming, but it makes me angry to see how he does absorb himself in old rubbish. It is better than horses, though.

*Lady St. Asaph.* I thought you said he was in love with your friend? She certainly is entirely modern, as nobody ever heard of her till five years ago!

*Princess.* Oh, you mean till all Paris crowded to her great picture of the 'Gleaners.' Well, no artist can be heard of until something's exhibited.

*Ipswich.* Come, Princess, you don't mean seriously that she has thrown over L'Estrange?

*Princess.* I am very sorry I said it. I ought not to have said it; but as I have said it, I can't unsay it, and it is true.

*Ipswich.* Well—it beats me!—when his marriage twelve years ago was such a blunder.

*Lady St. Asaph.* There cannot be any question of anything half so innocent as even a stupid marriage. Madame Glyon's husband is alive—the Princess told us so the other day.

*Princess.* You quite misunderstood what I meant, and my friend is quite free to marry Lord L'Estrange if she choose to marry him.

*Lady Cowes.* Well, I think he had better ask a few questions in Paris first—the questions you should have asked, dear Princess!

*Princess.* I never do ask questions about my friends. I was born in a country-house on the St. Lawrence, where nobody is



supposed to know good manners, and I was taught that to sneak behind anybody's back, to pry about them, was a very vulgar sort of thing to do. But, in society, everybody does seem to me to be vulgar.

[LADY COWES and LADY ST. ASAPH laugh slightly.

*Ipswich.* Well, yes, society is a bit of a cad, there's no doubt about it; we do slang one another so awfully. Here's L'Estrange; come to look after the *niello* teapot, I'll be bound.

*L'Estrange* (salutes them and adds to LADY ST. ASAPH)—I cannot tell you how sorry I am about Dorian. Are these things really to be sold?

*Ipswich.* There! That's all he thinks about. He wants the teapot and the tapestries. To have one's friends really interested in one's disappearance or death, one must have got together a lot of good things in pots and pans and bed-curtains and old iron.

*L'Estrange.* Are they really to be sold?

*Lady St. Asaph.* Oh, yes; he does not mean to come back.

*L'Estrange.* He will come back. No one can stay away from Rome who once has cared for it.

*Lady St. Asaph.* But they are all to be sold; he has left all directions to Costa's judgment.

*L'Estrange.* He is great friends with Costa. I am so very sorry; few have so fine a mind as Dorian; few give one such genial companionship.

*Princess.* And such delightful Tuesday teas. How we shall miss those Tuesdays with those solemn tapestries frowning at our frivolity!

*Lady St. Asaph.* We must be going homewards. Good-day, dear Princess; we shall meet at Madame Minghetti's.

[Exit with LADY COWES and IPSWICH.

*Princess.* I have to wait here for Carlino. He wants to look over the things before any regular arrangement is made about them. It seems Dorian has some wonderful *trasferato* work in steel and silver.

*L'Estrange.* Yes; I know it; it is exquisite. I will see Costa at once, and try and buy everything as it stands, without letting a sale come on. Dorian is terribly mistaken to think of selling his things. One should never do that.

*Princess.* Lord L'Estrange, I said just now that you cared for nothing but brocades and *bric-à-brac*. It seemed a little harsh when I had said it, but you see it is true. You are feeling nothing for Aldred Dorian; you are only thinking of buying his things, just as Carlino is.

*L'Estrange.* Princess, I am thinking of buying them, it is

true ; but I am only thinking of it for this reason—that I want to keep the *atelier* together just as Dorian left it, so that when he comes back, as he will certainly do, he can have it all again if he please to have it; he will only need to hand me over my purchase-money. I do not like Dorian's things to be dispersed.

*Princess.* Oh—h—h! I beg your pardon, I did misjudge you. But how can you go buying brocades at the Ghetto when you pretend to be miserable about Claire's indifference?

*L'Estrange.* *L'un n'empêche pas l'autre.* One's habits are a part of oneself; one puts them on as one puts one's boots on in the morning. Besides, you must remember I do not 'sorrow as those that have no hope.' I believe that Madame Glyon will come in time to do me justice, as you have now done in a lesser matter.

*Princess.* But she is going away.

*L'Estrange.* To Paris? Well, I usually spend the spring in Paris. I do not foresee any great obstacle in her return to Paris. If there were no greater——

*Princess.* And you really would make her your Countess?

*L'Estrange.* I would really make her my Countess, if you like that Court-circular form of expression. I prefer to say that I would make her my wife. It seems the warmer term.

*Princess.* Do you know, Lord L'Estrange, I am getting quite fond of you?

*L'Estrange.* I am too charmed.

*Princess.* I never thought you had so much feeling; and it isn't *only* evanescent, is it?

*L'Estrange.* As far as I know myself, it is not. It is of this that I want you to persuade your friend. She got rid of me yesterday by means of daffodils and a servant, and it is difficult for me to approach her again yet. She was so very cold. Indeed, she seems always disposed to resent as an impertinence the highest compliment that a man can pay to a woman.

*Princess.* Well, I have done all I can. But Claire has her own views—it is difficult to change them. I think you will do better not to worry her.

*L'Estrange.* Worry her! You certainly do treat one to rough facts, Princess. I suppose what you mean is that one must ride a waiting-race.

*Princess.* Yes, that is what I do mean. I quite understand your impatience. You are a very great person, and you have got a very high place, and you would give all you have to Claire, and you naturally expect your generosity to meet at least with gratitude. Only you see it is all spoilt in her eyes by the fact that you were equally generous to that poor peasant girl, and repented it.

*L'Estrange.* I think it hard that a long past folly, which was after all a chivalrous folly, should for ever be quoted against me.

*Princess.* Perhaps it is hard, but it is good for you to taste a wholesome bitterness for once. You have been fed on honey. (*The PRINCE enters.*) Carlino, it is no use your fretting yourself over the *trasferato*; Lord L'Estrange is going to buy up everything by a private arrangement.

*Prince.* Is that so, *caro mio*?

*L'Estrange.* I am going to try and do it, at any rate. It is folly to break up this charming *atelier*. Dorian will certainly return.

*Prince.* When he has ceased to break his heart about La Glyon. Laura should send that lady back to Paris: she makes mischief here. There is Sant' Elmo now wild to marry her, and he is *bon prince* and enormously rich, and a handsome lad too; she will take him, I dare say.

*Princess.* No, she will not; you will not understand, Carlino. She does not want to marry—again.

*Prince.* Oh, yes; she is a muse, and all that, but she will take a very big thing when it comes to her. Dorian was not a very big thing; he was only a fairly nice thing. That was not enough for your friend. She is ambitious. One sees that in the way her head is poised. Now, Sant' Elmo is a grand marriage; you cannot have a grander—off a throne: Roman prince, Spanish duke, Hungarian margraf, and rich—ouf!—if I were only as rich!

*Princess* (*low to L'ESTRANGE*). Don't you feel as if you were at Christie's or the Drouot, bidding against Lord Dudley for a *vieux Vienne* cup?

*L'Estrange.* I did not need the stimulus.

*Prince.* Lord L'Estrange, shall we go together to the Via Margutta? If Costa refuse to let you purchase *en bloc*, I should like to say a word to him about the *trasferato*.

*L'Estrange.* Certainly. The Princess comes with us?

*Princess.* No; I shall stay here till Claire comes, and then we are going very far out to some convent to see some Madonna of Mino's that no male eyes must profane.

[*MME. GLYON enters.* *The PRINCE and L'ESTRANGE bow to her and go out.*]

Claire, he is going to buy all Dorian's things and keep them till Dorian comes back. Isn't it nice of him? Do you know, he is very nice when you understand him. I do—I do, indeed, think you are in error.

*Mme. Glyon.* I know that I have been in error when I came into this room. I allowed a noble nature like Dorian's to fasten

its hopes on me, which he never would have done if we had not, tacitly at any rate, led him to believe that my husband was not living. I can never forgive myself the wreck of Dorian's happy and noble life; but, if you will believe me, until he spoke of it here, I never dreamed of his feeling for me anything more than that sympathy which the same tastes and art beget.

*Princess.* And now Carlino says there is Sant' Elmo?

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh, that handsome boy will find many to console him. Dorian is very different—to him I have been guilty.

*Princess.* And I think you are—not altogether right to Lord L'Estrange.

*Mme. Glyon.* How can anyone in a false position be altogether right to anyone? A false position is like a wrong focus in photography; it distorts everything. My motives in all I have done have been innocent enough, but concealment always ends in some sin or another.

*Princess.* No, no—sin is too big a word—too ugly a word; it does not suit you at all. Your worst faults are pride and oversensitiveness; they are no very grave ones. But indeed, Claire, he does love you now, not only with his fancy. I cannot see why you should not tell him.

*Mme. Glyon.* He would be disenchanted in one instant. He is only captive by his imagination. The other day he saw the cast of my foot at Story's studio, and found it perfect; if he knew now that it had ever gone in wooden shoes over the ploughed fields, he would find at once that the ankle was too thick or the instep too high. Alas! I know him so well—so well!

*Princess.* And you make him out a fool.

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh, no; only a *dilettante* full of caprice.

*Princess.* Well, I think you wrong him. I have said so fifty times; and I never thought to live to say so, either. Would you let me try the experiment I told you of the other day? He ought at least to know you live. If you continue to reject him, he may turn for solace to someone else; then he may want to marry that someone else, and then you will have to tell him, *coûte que coûte*.

*Mme. Glyon.* Oh, no; I have kept silence twelve years. I can very well keep it all my life. And you will never betray me?

*Princess.* Never, unless you bid me. But I think you do very wrongly. You are of that sort of nature which self-sacrifice fascinates; and because an act is a martyrdom, you cannot also imagine that it may be at the same time an error.

*Mme. Glyon.* Laura! you grow quite logical and subtle in your arguments; I never knew you thought out things so much.

*Princess.* I think them out because I love you, and I see

your whole life going to waste ; no, not to waste, because your works are fine, and you spend all your days doing good ; but barren of all happiness, of all sympathy, of all tenderness, and even, you know, subject to the rumours of lying tongues.

*Mme. Glyon.* That last does not matter.

*Princess.* Oh, no ; you are very proud, and falsehood cannot touch you ; but still it tells, somehow, when the world crowns you with one hand and scourges you with the other. Will you let me try my experiment—just try it ?

*Mme. Glyon.* It would be unwise, and it would be useless ; I am sure he would take his release so gladly on any terms.

*Princess.* That is what I will see if you will let me. Do think it over. Tell me to-night. I don't wish to persuade, but indeed—indeed, Claire—it is not fair to him to let him go on in ignorance, in a fool's paradise ; and if he do know, and behaves unworthily, he will never force you to live with him—he is too truly a gentleman.

*Mme. Glyon.* He will have no wish, my dear, when once he knows, ever to see my face again. Try your experiment, as you call it ; but if he would take his liberty so, remember, I will be dead to him for ever, though I hide myself in the uttermost ends of the earth.

*Princess.* That, of course. But if he be loyal to his forgotten wife, then you will pardon him ? [MME. GLYON is silent.

*Princess.* Silence is assent. Let us drive to the convent, and we will not speak another word. I have all my fibs to fabricate.

*Mme. Glyon.* He will accept.

*Princess.* He will refuse ! [Exeunt.

## SCENE VII.

*In the Cimontanara Grounds ; on the stone seat of S. Filippo Neri are seated L'ESTRANGE and the PRINCESS ; facing them are the Campagna, Porta San Giovanni, the mountains of Albano.*

*Princess.* In this stone summerhouse S. Philip, your namesake, preached to the giddy youths that loved him. Now I, who am very giddy, am going to preach to you. I asked you to come here because I am never sure of not being interrupted in my own house, and I have to tell you something very, very serious.

*L'Estrange.* I am sure you are my friend, Princess.

*Princess.* I am. But my friendship can be of little use to

you. Now Claire does care for you—cares for you as you wish' but——

*L'Estrange.* Never mind the 'buts!' How can I thank you, Princess?

*Princess.* It will be a folly, you know. Another folly!

*L'Estrange.* I do not think so.

*Princess.* And you did not think so once of the other. Are you sure you will not change?

*L'Estrange.* I dare swear I shall not.

*Princess.* But if the world——

*L'Estrange.* The world will have no power over me.

*Princess.* It had twelve years ago.

*L'Estrange.* Pray let the past alone. I want to live in the present. What you have told me this morning makes it as cloudless as the day is.

*Princess.* Wait! I have much to tell you.

*L'Estrange.* What else can matter? I am happy.

*Princess.* Ah, don't say so; wait till you hear everything. Claire could have cared for you, but—— I feel frightened to tell you, but——

*L'Estrange* (*growing pale*). Glyon is not dead?

*Princess.* It is not that. Maître Jules Desrosne, the great French advocate, you know, is in Rome. He has come for the French Cardinals——

*L'Estrange.* What has that to do with me?

*Princess.* Well, I don't know how to tell you, but I must; and I could not, if there were not some consolation in it too; but Maître Desrosne has known me from a child—he defended a case for my father against the French Government—and as he heard the gossip of Rome, which made out that Claire was going to marry you next week, he told me to tell you something, which he thought I might break to you better than he could, as you have never known him.

*L'Estrange.* Well? Speak out, Princess. What is this terrible thing that a French lawyer knows?

*Princess.* Oh, do not jest; pray do not jest. Maître Desrosne is quite distressed for you: it is—it is, that your young wife did not die.

*L'Estrange.* What?

*Princess.* Yes, that is it—that is what he says; she is alive—he knows her very well; he has been her counsel.

*L'Estrange.* Good God! Are you mad, or am I?

*Princess.* Nobody is; oh, pray do not look so; you frighten me. You look as if I had turned you into stone.

[*L'ESTRANGE rises and moves about with his face averted.*

*L'Estrange.* I will not frighten you, Princess. Only give me one moment to get my breath—you have stunned me.

*Princess (murmuring).* I am so sorry! Desrosne could not tell you before, because he only knew it in confidence, as her adviser; she gave him permission now because she heard of your—

*L'Estrange.* But how can it be? She was drowned, and it was supposed her body was washed out by the underground waters to the Seine.

*Princess.* Oh, yes; that is quite true. I mean, it is quite true that she did throw herself into the moat, and meant to drown herself; but her father had come to the convent, begging to be taken on as gardener there for the sake of being near her; and Maître Desrosne tells me that her father rescued her from the water when she had sunk twice unseen—for it was twilight—and hid himself with her for some time, in the cottage of a forester who was his friend. She heard you thought her dead, and let it be so. She had friends amongst the convent girls; one of them she wrote to, and confided in, and asked how she could gain a livelihood. That girl was going back to her own country for the vacation, and as she loved your wife, took her with her to her own people. In that country she maintained herself by teaching; she would not be dependent on her friends, though they were rich. When they came to Europe, she, I believe, came with them. All this Maître Desrosne has known for years.

*L'Estrange.* Where is she now?

*Princess.* You do frighten me! Carlino's violence is not one half so terrible as your English quietude. Your eyes look as if you saw a ghost—

*L'Estrange.* I do see—many. Not dead, good God!—and I—hear it as the worst calamity that could befall me! Not dead? Not dead?

*Princess.* No; Maître Desrosne has known her seven years. He should have told you earlier.

*L'Estrange.* He should, indeed.

*Princess.* But I suppose he could not. Lawyers are like confessors. Your wife has lived honourably.

*L'Estrange.* Ah!

*Princess.* She has maintained herself here, and in America.

*L'Estrange.* She has been in America?

*Princess.* So he says. You will wish to see her?

*L'Estrange (with a shudder).* Do not talk of it! I will endeavour to do my duty.

*Princess.* But if she were so contrary to all your tastes and wishes then, will she be less so now? Twelve years passed in hard work does not give the bloom of Ninon, and you—you are not less fastidious now than then. What a future for you!

*L'Estrange.* Spare me! This advocate will give me means of proving all that he has said?

*Princess.* Oh, yes; he will, of course. I do not think, though, that she wants you to take her back.

[*L'ESTRANGE covers his eyes with his hand a moment.*]

*Princess.* And I do know Claire cares for you.

*L'Estrange.* Spare me a little, Princess! Where is this Maitre Desrosne? I must see him at once.

*Princess.* He stays at the Farnese Palace.

*L'Estrange.* You believe he speaks the truth?

*Princess.* He must! He is so great a person in the law; he will be a judge whenever he pleases; he has your wife's letters with him. And—and—he said something else, Lord Estrange, which gave me courage to tell you this; if he had not said the good with the bad, I never could have dealt you such a blow; for you know I have got quite fond of you since you loved Claire.

*L'Estrange.* What good can there be?

*Princess.* Well, it seems that when she returned to France, years ago, your wife went to him with an introduction from a French bishop, and told him her position, and asked him as to the legality of her marriage, of which she had become doubtful. Now, Maitre Desrosne told me——

*L'Estrange.* What?

*Princess.* Well, that the marriage is not a perfectly legal one—not perfectly; that there are loopholes by which you could get free—some omission of some trifle, some blunder in the date of your wife's birth through the stupidity of her own people—no fault of yours—but you attended too much to the religious ceremony and not enough to the civil one. He would explain it better, but his strong opinion is that you can break the marriage; annul it, if you please; he is sure that both France and England will set you free. If he had not said that, I never should have summoned courage to tell you, knowing as I do, too, that Claire's happiness is at stake.

[*L'ESTRANGE looks at her in silence.*]

*Princess.* How you do look! Indeed, indeed, Maitre Desrosne said so, and you can see himself any day you like; he stays a month at the Palazzo Farnese. He had gone into the question years ago for your wife *au grand secret*, and he is one of the very greatest lawyers in all France. He never would give an opinion lightly.

[*L'ESTRANGE is still silent.*]



*Princess.* Do say something! You frighten me! Perhaps I should have told you the good news first. You don't look now one bit more glad.

*L'Estrange* (*rising and standing facing her*). Princess, I do not know what you take me for; that this poor creature lives is most terrible to me, that I do not deny. I am no saint, as was St. Philip Neri. But, if you believe I could take advantage of a legal quibble to cast shame upon a woman who in her youth trusted me,—well! you have known me very little, though we have spent so many pleasant hours together.

*Princess.* But, heavens and earth! I thought you loved Claire?

*L'Estrange.* You know well that I do love her most dearly, but I cannot stoop to dishonour even for her: the very basest sort of dishonour, too. Just heavens! to hire men of law to hound down in the dust a hapless soul who gave herself to me in all good faith and innocence! Can you think I would deny her rights, whatever they may cost me, merely because some forgotten minutiae of men's trumpety laws have lost them to her?

*Princess.* You refuse to free yourself?

*L'Estrange.* At such a price I must refuse, or be a scoundrel. My life will be most wretched if all you say is true; but, at least, it will not be foul with perfidy and cowardice.

*Princess.* Ah! ah! there are depths in you to be stirred! I was right! And now——. Well—well—perhaps, you know, you will not be so *very* wretched after all! The aftermath may be richer than the first crop was. You will bless Time the mower. Yes, you will. Ask Claire!—— [*She rises and moves away.*]

MME. GLYON *advances slowly from behind the stone summer-house and the bay and arbutus that grow about it. She holds out her hands to L'ESTRANGE in a timid appeal. She says:*

Love! I forgive you. Will you forgive me? or will you despise me? [*He starts and falls back; then takes her in his arms.*]

*L'Estrange.* Great God! How could I be so blind?

OUIDA.

(*The End.*)

## About Yorkshire.

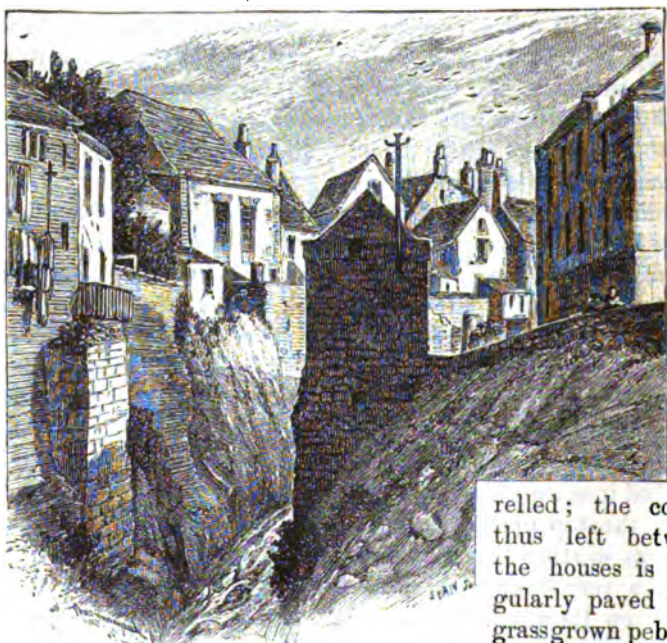
### II.—ROBIN HOOD'S BAY, SAND'S END, RUNSWICK.

THERE is nothing specially remarkable in the drive from Whitby to Robin Hood's Bay, except that in this direction one gets a splendid view of the town and also of St. Hilda's Abbey. A traveller approaching Whitby from this side receives a much grander idea of the fine old ruins crowning the headland than he gets when reaching Whitby from the inland way by Pickering, for it must be confessed that the view of this Abbey from the West Cliff of Whitby has a bare and skeleton effect, and the ruins appear of very small extent. But otherwise the country and the villages on this road lack interest somewhat.

Some little way, however, before we reached the steep descent to the Bay town, we got a most picture-like view of one side of the broad bay, three miles across from nab to nab, with a narrow girdle of sand and a pavement of rock. At the farther end is the Peak, about five hundred feet high. On this side rises a green hill with clusters of brown-walled red-roofed cottages clinging to its side like a crowd of red-tufted birds. Then the road turns a little, up comes the cliff-side between us and our picture, and the fishing town, like the castle of the Vale of St. John, seems to have vanished into the side of the hill to which it clings so closely.

At the top of the descent our driver halted, and told us the road was so steep that it was customary to walk down hill. It is indeed a very steep road, and some distance down is crossed by a river on its way from the moor, which forms a ravine or gully, as these clefts are called, beside the road. The sides of this cleft were in brilliant light, orange and rich reds and browns, with graceful wreaths of greenery clinging here and there; the farther side was walled in some places, to support the houses, which looked as if they grew out of the rock, with their brown sides and slated and red-tiled roofs above. Facing us, with its back to the sun, so that its steep gabled side was almost black with shadow, was a tall house that rose from the bottom of the gully and reached above the top of it. The road is terraced along one side of the gully and leads down through the streets to the Bay itself; but a bridge crosses the cleft where we had halted, and we found our

way across this to the inaccessible-looking houses on the rock. These are built in a succession of narrow twisting alleys paved with irregular round stones, a few stone cottages on either side, and then would come a flight of shallow grassgrown steps, with another flight at a sharp angle. At the corner of one of these alleys was a pump, the ground falling away from it on all sides, so that there was only space for one picher at a time to stand to receive water. We found as we went down that the whole town is built in these irregular passages, piled up the banks one above another, with sudden, and often rugged, flights of steps connecting them. These steps start up unexpectedly, and the houses are often set at angles turning away from one another as though they had quar-



*The Gully, Robin Hood's Bay.*

relled; the corner thus left between the houses is irregularly paved with grassgrown pebbles. Outside the doors are wooden porches

to keep off the wind, and we saw some with balconies gay with scarlet and blue jerseys hung to dry on the rails. Some of the balconies had geraniums and nasturtiums in full blossom; and leading down into the pebble-paved passage below were quaint wooden stair-flights; here and there a withered-faced old woman stood calling down to girls below who were hanging clothes to dry across the passage.

Going along to the end of a pebble-paved passage, we saw the

houses built on the side of the steep cliff one above another ; occasionally walls are built up from below to support them and in the chinks of these we saw an abundance of wall-flower blossom.

Everywhere huge nets were stretched out to dry. Rosy-cheeked children and pigs were plentiful playing about promiscuously. Sometimes a small bit of garden is walled up above the pathway, and when we crossed the steep street to the opposite side of the town and began to mount the broken, grassed cliff, we found a steep flight of steps leading to the last cottage in the place. Its door stood open, and within sat a cobbler at his work ; a bit of fire on the hearth behind him showed a low-roofed tiny room. He looked as if he might have been sitting there for years, a bit of dark brown, wrinkled still-life, seemingly unconscious of passers-by.

Outside, in front of the brown-shuttered window, was a row of huge covered tubs, and beyond a plot of brilliant orange marigolds, sloping up to a potato ground which encroached on the moor. We climbed a little higher and got a grand view of the Bay, with its stretch of silver sands and the bold cliffs beyond. At our feet, and clinging up the side of the cliff, which seems to have been partially hollowed out to hold it, is the quaint little Bay town.

Two old fishermen, one with long silver white hair reaching to his shoulders, were sitting on the brow of the cliff when we reached it. They were quite ready to talk, and pointed out to us a yawl at the usual landing-place, just now inaccessible on account of a high tide. The yawl, they said, had brought coals to the town, but these could not be landed. Folk must wait, the elder man said, till the carts and wheelbarrows of the place could reach the boat.

The old men told us there was little fishing now in t' Bay, as they called it.

'T' lads is at t' seea,' the white-haired man said ; ' they'se at t' Baltic and such like,' and then he added with a grand air, ' Ah've seean t' Baltic.'

His companion, who looked ten years younger, and who was trying to keep in order a red-cheeked, strong-willed boy about four years old, said—

' He's seean t' Baltic an' ivvery place, an' he's aughty foive,' then he looked as if he thought we ought to do homage to this patriarch of the place.

He pointed out the inn to us, standing out in front of the town almost in the sea itself. This inn seems to be in a somewhat dangerous position ; the view from its windows is very fine.

Robin Hood's Bay looks in some ways like a small sketch of Whitby, taken before modern improvements robbed the larger town of much of its quaintness and picturesque beauty.

The original name of the little town seems to have been Fyling, but it was afterwards called after Robin Hood, who often came here when some more desperate fray than usual obliged him to leave Nottinghamshire. The broad trackless moors that separate Whitby and its neighbourhood from the rest of the country made this a safe retreat; or he could at once take refuge with his men on board the fishing-boats, which were always in readiness for him.

There is a legend which tells how Robin Hood and Little John dined with the Abbot of Whitby. After dinner the Abbot said to the outlaw captain that he should like to see a specimen of the famous archery he had heard of. Upon this Robin Hood proposed that they should all go up to the top of the Abbey. From thence he and his lieutenant each shot an arrow; both the shafts flew an immense distance, and they fell near Whitby Lathes, one on one side of the lane, one on the other; but Little John's arrow flew farther than his captain's did.

The Abbot was so delighted with the feat, that he caused a pillar to be set up in memory of it at each of the places where the arrows had fallen. Charlton says that in his day these pillars were still standing; 'the field where Robin's arrow fell being called 'Robin-his-Field,' and the other, wherein is the pillar for Little John's arrow, still preserving the name of 'John's Field.' The distance from these points to the Abbey is more than a mile! The vast stretch of moor behind the Bay is called Fylingdales. We lunched pleasantly at the inn in a low-windowed room, full of sunshine, looking over the sea, and then climbed the steep hill to our carriage and drove to Fyling Thorpe, a quaint little village on the fringe of Fylingdales Moor. About midway between this village and the sea we passed an interesting modern church, built from the designs of the late George Street.

The view from Thorpe is exquisite; in front is the broad Bay, a semicircle ended by the lofty peak, and behind the village rises the long dark stretch of moorland, full of hidden glens and deep gullies, with tiny streams here and there murmuring over stones on their way to the sea. Some of the cottages look charming. One, placed sideways to the road, is called the old Vicarage; it is surrounded by a most quaint and truly English garden, clematis and honeysuckle made a bower of the porch, and the vegetable plot was screened by espaliers, glowing russet and yellow with apples, and bordered by tasselled fuchsias, gay asters, fragrant cloves, and sweet peas. At the farther end was a row of straw beehives, and close by them grew a patriarch among rosemary bushes—it had a trunk almost as large as that of a forest tree, and looked as if it might

have been there since the days of Robin Hood ; it was tenderly propped, too, no doubt for preservation from some more than usually keen blast from the sea.

The cottage was exquisitely clean and neat within. There were lodgings to be had here, and we thought they looked pleasant and comfortable. There was something in the atmosphere both of the place and of its owners—an old man and his daughter—that suggested sunshine and leisure ; it was a place one would have liked to linger in for days.

‘ Would you like some tea ? ’ the mistress asked when she had taken us over her house and round her garden, and we had praised her flowers.

We thought this a delightful suggestion, and she brought quickly and placed deftly tea and eggs and cake and jam on a snowy cloth, spread in the pretty little parlour with its clematis-framed window. It was a charming end to our day ; we could not do full justice to our hostess’s good cheer, but it was delicious to rest in the cool, flower-bowered room with the hum of the gnats coming in through the window above the deep distant chorus of the sea.

We wondered a little about provisions in such a secluded spot, and we asked the owner of the cottage how she procured them.

‘ T’ carrier’s cart goes twice a week to Whitby,’ she said ; ‘ an’ you can ride in it an’ willin’.’ She went on to explain that the carrier also kept a waggonette, which could be hired when his horse was not wanted for the cart.

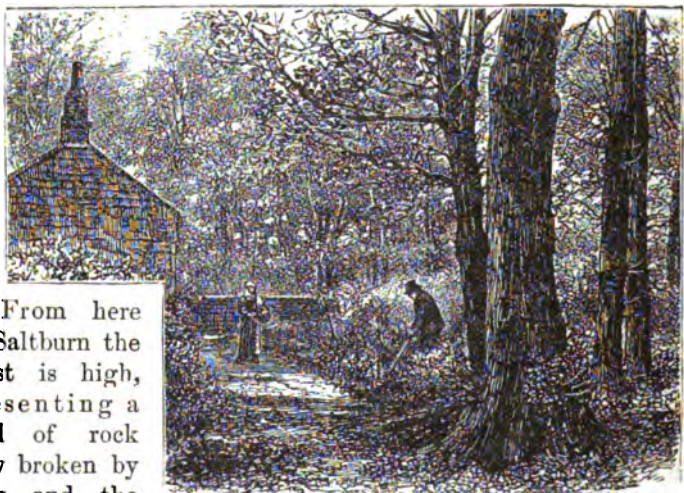
In fine weather this must be a delightful nook ; and we thought that a storm must be a grand sight at Fyling Thorpe, both on the sea and on the moor. The people are very primitive in this tiny village away from the high road and left to itself. The nearest railway station is six miles off. We heard that the ‘ Evil eye ’ is still believed in in the district, and that till quite lately one of the inhabitants thus fatally gifted always walked about with his eyes fixed on the ground, and never looked at anyone to whom he spoke ; his glance was cursed, and he dared not speak to one of the rosy children, lest some blight should fall on it.

While we sat indoors at tea, we had noticed our hostess in the garden among her flowers, and when we said good-bye to this charming little retreat, she handed into the carriage a huge nosegay which she had gathered for us, made up of her choicest blossoms.

Our next journey was to the coast north of Whitby, which we had heard was wilder and more interesting than any part we had

seen. The drive through Mulgrave woods is beautiful; the trees are stately, and there is a handsome, well-kept appearance about the place. But we thought these woods far less romantic and picturesque than those near Egton and Glaisdale. The castle is large, and there is also a ruined castle of ancient date in the woods between the becks of Sand's End and East Row, said to have been founded by a giant called Wade.

Sand's End lies in the gully made by the beck, and is a charming little village, sweet and peaceful in the evening light. It is said to have existed in the year 1200. There are alum rocks along this coast, and both at Sand's End and at Kettleness, the projecting point beyond, there are alum works on a large scale. Above, on the top of the cliff, is Lythe, which commands a fine view of St. Hilda's Abbey. Indeed, in whichever direction one goes, the fine old ruin is a landmark.



From here to Saltburn the coast is high, presenting a wall of rock only broken by bays and the gullies worn by the little becks;

*Autumn in Mulgrave Woods.*

in stormy weather the rock-strewn shore is full of danger for vessels. Beyond Kettleness are Runswick Bay and next to it Staithes, the most romantically placed villages on this coast.

Staithes, which lies farthest off, is a small town built below the cliff, an almost perpendicular wall on each side of a narrow creek, with a charming little beck finding its way to the sea beside Colburn Nab, a huge black rock that seems to curve round and shelter this little sequestered place.

It is not easy to get in and out of Staithes, except by the









*Evening at Sand's End, near Whitby.*

Phou

seaway, for the road is singularly steep. The houses stand perilously near the sea, and many of the original dwellings have been beaten down by the waves, as well as a sea wall once built to protect the village.

The most interesting association connected with the little fishing-town now lies buried under the shingle; this is the site of Saunderson's drapery and grocery shop, in which the famous Captain Cook sold pounds of tea and yards of calico when a lad of fourteen, for he was apprenticed to Saunderson and destined for a quiet tradesman till one day he left his situation and went to sea.

Cook was not, however, a native of Staithes; he was the son



*Fishermen.*

of a day labourer of Marton, a small village in Cleveland about eight miles from Yarm. In the church register book of Marton is the entry, 'November 3, 1778, James, ye son of James Cook, day-labourer, baptised.' One hears nothing of the great sailor's mother, but his father's burial-place is testified to by these lines:—

No monumental stone adorns the nook  
Where rests the parent of the gallant Cook;  
Cook stands aloft upon a hill of fame,  
His father lies at Marske without a name.

Marske is a fishing town north of Staithes, once terribly celebrated for smuggling exploits.

There is a touching tradition that James Cook, then living at Redcar, began to learn to read at seventy-seven years of age, so that he might read for himself the marvellous tidings of his son's first voyage round the world. What a state of mingled joy and pride the old man must have lived in when the wonderful news first reached his ears!

I was extremely interested in gleaning all I could learn about Captain Cook—the first hero of my childish days I can remember. He always comes back to me in the shape of a huge brown leather folio volume much worn, the inside leaves yellow with age, but filled with the most delightful pictures—black ladies and gentlemen, huge-faced and tattooed, their noses and lips pierced with heavy jewelled ornaments, and their woolly hair towering up into shapes that almost rivalled the chignons and other fashionable monstrosities with which women disfigured themselves some years ago. I can remember that when my grandmother's door was opened my first thought was Captain Cook, and that when I had been duly greeted by grandmother and aunts my first words were, 'I want Captain Cook.' It was a book never to be tired of, its only drawback in my eyes being that I was too tiny to turn over the leaves, so that I was never left in undisturbed possession of it, and that the aunt who showed it could never tell me satisfactorily the histories of these wonderful black beauties.

So it was delightful to visit the neighbourhood in which Captain Cook had been brought up, and to hear how my hero had learned to read.

As soon as he was old enough he was sent to tend sheep and run errands for the husband of 'Dame Walker,' who lived at Marton Grange. Dame Walker was village schoolmistress, and she was also daughter to the wealthiest farmer in the neighbourhood. She being a thrifty soul undertook to pay her little errand-boy by teaching him to read, and in the evening, when the sheep were folded and work was over for the day, the little lad placed his stool beside the dame as she sat near the hearth and learned first his alphabet and then how to read. One wonders if he were as quick at learning as he was in discovery.

At eight years old he was taken away from Dame Walker and put to school not far off, at Ayton. 'Not far from Ayton, upon Easby Moor,' says a quaint old guidebook, 'stands a hollow obelisk erected in memory of Captain Cook by the late Mr. Campion, of Whitby, which tells of the Captain's virtues and the times and places of his birth and death, on three iron plates, at a wearisome

length to read when the cold winds are sweeping over the moor.' The only record in Marton Church is a small tablet, 'To the memory of Captain James Cook, navigator.'

The fishermen of Staithes bear a high character for courage and intelligence, and the women seem in all ways their equals, taking a full share of work—unloading the boats on their return, spreading the huge nets to dry, for two-thirds of the population are employed in the fishery. There is no safe anchorage for large boats at Staithes, so the yawls from Saturday morning to Sunday evening are taken round to Rosedale Wyke, more than a mile south-east. Many lives are lost in these fisheries; it is a common saying at Staithes, 'T' sea gat him,' in speaking of a departed fisherman.

Runswick is about a mile nearer Whitby than Staithes is. The Bay here is very fine and enters deeply into the shore. The rugged cliff on its north-west side is broken into shelves or steps, on which the quaint houses of the town are perched at various elevations on the face of the rock; at Runswick Bay the very arrangement of the houses seems to suggest secure hiding-places for contraband cargoes. Many of these houses have fallen from their dangerous position in the landslips that occasionally take place. But the people are indifferent about this risk. They tell you that, two hundred years ago, one wild winter night the whole village, except one house, sank gradually from its foundations towards the sea, and that not one of its inhabitants perished. The Runswick Bay men are also a fine bold race of fishermen; it is said, however, that when they reach the bay with their boats full of glittering fish, they never attempt to bring their nets ashore; that charge is left to the wives and mothers of the community, who may be seen toiling along, their heavy-laden baskets on shoulders or on head, like the *poissardes* at Portel, near Boulogne.

Young, the Whitby historian, writing some years ago, says that the Runswick Bay folk are full of singular superstitions. 'Among the animals that feel the changes of the atmosphere the domestic cat is distinguished, and this, no doubt, has associated puss with witches and other storm-raising spirits. When the fishermen of Runswick are expected home, their wives and children, the better to ensure their safe arrival, exterminate the cats in the village and procure a fresh supply after the boats have returned. If the wind is unpropitious, the children light a fire on the top of the cliff and dancing round it invoke the spirit of the storm in this way—

Souther wind, souther,  
And blow father home to my mother.'

Kettleness Point ends Runswick Bay and stretches out between it and Sand's End. At the bottom of Runswick Bay there is a cave in the alum rock. The tide fills this cave at high water; it used to be regarded as the abode of a goblin called Hob, and is still called Hob's hole. Wonderful stories were told of Hob, and how he used to be resorted to by mothers when their children suffered from whooping-cough. At low water the mother carried her child into the cave and in a loud voice thus evoked the goblin: 'Hob, Hob, Hob, mah bairn's gotten kink-cough; take 't off, take 't off.'

The cave is seventy feet long and twenty wide at the mouth, and was once divided by a double natural column. Hob used to wander over the moors behind the Bay with a lantern, and often decoyed travellers into the 'pots' to be found among the rocks, or else, in a driving night-storm of rain, would offer them shelter in his hole and leave them to perish by the incoming sea.



*Runswick, near Whitby.*

when the tide rose. Of late years a belief in these superstitions has been indignantly repudiated, but it will be long before the quaintness of the people and the primitive aspect of Staithes and Runswick Bay can be taken from them. There is a daring character about these north-eastern Yorkshiremen that recalls their Norse ancestry, and seems to accord with the wild character of the country.

We felt tempted to explore Cleveland from this point and to visit the priory of Guisborough and the castles of Danby and Saltburn. Besides Captain Cook, Cædmon, the ancient poet, whose inspirations to write came to him in his cell at Straonschalk, was a Cleveland man; Gower, too, and Roger Ascham were born on the

outskirts of this wild picturesque country—but instead of exploring the Cleveland Hills we turned southward, and went by rail through the Vale of Pickering.

We had heard so much of the beauty of this bit of railway that we were a little disappointed. The scenery is very like some part of the Ardennes, but on a smaller scale and less interesting. The colour on the hills is very fine, and every now and then, at a turn in the road, we come upon exquisite bits of distance. But doubtless it is a country to be explored, not to be seen only from the railway, although between Grosmont and Pickering we could not see that there was any road over the moors. Below Grosmont the valley of the Esk is richly wooded, and the country has a pretty and varied character; then we come to bare moorland—in colour brilliant green, suggestive of bogs with rich stripes of heather now and then. Next come bare grey cliffs, half clothed in places with bramble and gorse, and then we reach the real beauty of this vale—lofty banks with valleys descending through them. The valley through which Levisham Beck flows is charming, so wild and full of colour. Between Levisham station and Pickering the high grassy banks open frequently into picturesque gorges, showing exquisite bits of distance beyond them. We longed to penetrate into some of the glens thus suddenly revealed. The moor on either side was a rich red with heather, and, with the orange brown of the bracken and the brilliant green and soft olive of the patches of turf, made a glow of colour all the way, which literally seemed to wind beside Pickering Beck. Not far from Levisham station are the famous Cawthorn camps, four in number, through which the Roman road passed to Dunsby Wyke. Pickering Vale runs through some of the loveliest parts of the country, stretching as it does from Coxwold, at the foot of the Hambleton Hills, to Filey, on the coast near Scarborough.

At a short distance from the Roman camps is the old Norman Church of Lastingham, so mutilated and desecrated to gratify the vanity of the painter Jackson, that one can only wonder such outrages should have been permitted. Jackson seems to have been much thought of by Whitby people of those days, and in 1835 Lastingham Church 'was repaired and beautified after a design' by Jackson, who was a native of the place. To display the altar-piece he painted for the church—only a copy of Correggio's 'Christ in the Garden'—he destroyed the ancient apse. Doubtless the self-belief peculiar to this country, and which, from their long isolation from the rest of the world, seems intensified in the north-eastern district, made this painter believe that his work would be more edifying than the venerable architecture, some of which may



have been built before the destruction of the ancient monastery visited by Bede. Happily, the crypt was left untouched by this profane restorer; it is perfect, and an excellent specimen of a Norman crypt.

The town of Pickering looked quaint but not very interesting. The ruins of the castle seem to be of some extent, and we were told that inside the church were some very curious old tombs; one of them, with two recumbent figures on it, is pointed out as the monument of John of Gaunt and his wife. But Pickering is a good headquarters for visiting the beautiful country round it, and its Beck, which, rising at Bilsdale, joins the Rye, passes by Rievaulx Abbey and Helmsley, and then, swollen with all the tributary becks that flow into it in its course through the lovely vale of Pickering, finally runs into the Derwent not far from Old Malton, seems to connect it at either end with some of the most interesting parts of Yorkshire, for Old Malton is remarkable as having been a Roman settlement where many old treasures have been discovered, and near New Malton stood Malton Priory, part of which still exists in the parish church of the town.

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

*(To be continued.)*

## Old City Squares.

THERE are nooks and corners in the City of London where comparative silence prevails: for the sounds which enter the old squares, and courts, and alleys, are the exceptions; creeping in, as it were, to prove the rule: they are sounds which seem to have lost their way, to have followed the wrong turning: modest sounds discovering their mistake and retreating apologetically in subdued whispers. For a silent place, surrounded by the fierce activity of life, is the City's poetry in its pages of prose. And it is something to be religiously preserved: a recognised institution; a legacy bequeathed to us by dead centuries.

Turning eastward, and entering Bishopsgate Street Without, where the roar of traffic is loudest, it is but necessary to walk down a narrow street of lofty warehouses, and we reach one of these havens. Here the noise is shut out as though ponderous doors had been closed behind us, and there rises up in the mind an indescribable sense of repose and mystery. The very atmosphere—heavy with secrets—is agitated by the sound of our footstep: an echo falls and links the present with the past. Upon this tranquil spot—known in these prosaic days as Devonshire Square—was once a garden, something approaching a paradise: a place 'made for the soul to wander in,' amidst the songs of birds, the whisperings of leaves and of lovers. 'Jasper Fisher,' says Stow, 'free of the Goldsmiths, late one of the six clerks of the chauncerie and a justice of the peace,' built a large and beautiful mansion here, with pleasure gardens and bowling-alleys laid out in magnificent style. The nobility and gentry came to visit Jasper Fisher in crowds; and, as we are told, 'the queen's majesty Elizabeth hath lodged there.' But Fisher, being a man of no great calling, possessions, or wealth, and being indebted to many, was unable, for any length of time, to keep up such a large and sumptuous establishment. It gradually fell into ruin and decay, and was mockingly called 'Fisher's Folly.' What signs are there of Fisher's Folly now? The square is gloomy and deserted. Half the houses are unoccupied: and there is an air of mistrust—for which Fisher is doubtless responsible—apparent everywhere. 'To let, To let,' looks out of numerous windows. But no one seemingly has any belief in this appeal for occupation. The doors of these houses cannot have been unbarred or unbolted for years. One old house appears to have lost all hope of ever securing another tenant; it is padlocked

and chained in a manner calculated to make a jailor's mouth water. The door is of massive oak, darkened by dust and age. The large iron knocker is a defiant fist: and lying upon the steps as we passed by was a youthful negro, under the shadow of padlock and chain, who looked as though he had had his head punched by the pugnacious knocker, and had sat down in consequence to sleep it off. Between two of the first-floor windows is placed a board. Upon it is inscribed, '*To be let on lease.*' What further lease, we wondered, could this old house have to run? Surely the bricks are blackened and begrimed with more than ninety-nine years' accumulation of dust and smoke? The central portions of the arch over the doorway have fallen out, like front teeth, from age and decay; the broad steps leading there are worn by the feet of ancestors, and have grown as green as though they were tombstones shifted there from off their graves. The seeds of Fisher's folly have all been sown! Two trees standing at remote corners of the square are apparently withering fast. The Countess of Devonshire was the last lady of rank who clung to her ancestral home in the city. She died in Devonshire Square nearly two hundred years ago.

Still farther eastward, but still only a step from the commercial din of Bishopsgate Street Without,

Where Spitalfield with real India vies,

are to be found some sombre-looking red brick houses, built about the time of the early Georges. This place is called Spital Square, but how it came to be christened so it is difficult to imagine. Two streets meet at right angles; and in a corner of one of these streets there is a garden. We suspect this garden of having seen better days. It looks as though it had been put into that corner in disgrace, out of a more dignified position in the centre of the square, which at some period it possibly occupied. In size it is modest; and if the two overgrown shrubs and the dwarf tree did not happen to be on friendly terms, entwining their branches like an embrace, they would have killed each other long ago. All day long—we cannot answer for the night—an elderly gentleman walks up and down. There is an expression of great responsibility on his face. Is he the custodian of the garden, or of the square, or of both? He limits his patrol to the space in front of the garden railings. But from this point he commands a view of the entrance to the 'Square' which is fiercely guarded by posts with iron spikes. Sometimes he grows thoughtful, when he stops and leans upon his stick. He has somewhat the appearance of a

Chelsea pensioner, in his long coat and electro-plated buttons. Perhaps this is his native place: and this garden is the one green spot in Spitalfields which remains to remind him of his youth. Two centuries back presents this square as an open plot of ground, with a pulpit standing in the north-east corner, and near to it a house for the accommodation of the Lord Mayor and corporation during the preaching of the Spital sermons. At a more remote time an open area, part of the burial-ground immediately adjacent to the Priory and hospital of St. Mary Spital, 'founded in 1197 by Walter Brune and Rosia his wife'—at a period still more remote, the burial-place of Roman London. On the east side of this Priory 'lieth a large field,' Stow tells us, 'of old time called Lolesworth, now Spittlefield, which about the year 1576 was broken up for clay to make brick. In the digging thereof many earthen pots, called urnæ, were found, full of ashes and burnt bones of men, to wit, of the Romans that inhabited there; for it was the custom of the Romans to burn their dead, to put their ashes in an urn, and then bury the same with certain ceremonies in some field appointed for that purpose near the city. There hath also been found,' says Stow, 'in the same field divers coffins of stone containing the bones of men.' In one of the houses in Spital Square lived Pope's friend Lord Bolingbroke, where

St. John's self (Great Dryden's friend before)  
With open arms received one poet more.

Passing under a railway arch in Leman Street, out of the Commercial Road, and turning into a by-street, and down a court ornamented by an avenue of seamen's clothes, we come suddenly into a nautical square, with the distant view of a forest of masts and sails. The houses have a very wrecked appearance, and some of them are completely abandoned. One house seemed to be in distress, and was apparently sinking fast, with a board clinging on in front. There had been some lettering upon this board; but the words were washed out, probably during a storm. Sailors were staggering about on the pavement, seeming to be under the impression that they were in a heavy sea. A couple of these tars took a dive into one of the houses—with a door like the entrance to a cabin—as though they were going 'down below' to escape from being carried overboard by a coming wave. The shops, which are few in number, have nothing in their windows but flags, and models of ships crowding all sail, and models of waves over which they are scudding at racing speed. In one window we observed a sailing vessel (also crowding all sail) which had been placed under a glass case, as though there were some danger of its tacking across into the dock from whence doubtless it originally hailed.

In the centre of this marine place, known as Wellclose Square, once stood the celebrated Danish Church. It was pulled down some fifteen years ago. This church was built in 1696 by Caius Gabriel Cibber, the sculptor, at the expense of Christian V., king of Denmark, who gave it for the use of his subjects—merchants and seamen accustomed to visit the port of London. Caius Cibber, and his more famous son Colley Cibber, were both buried here. In 1845 the church was opened in Dock Street, close by, for British and foreign sailors. On the site of the old Danish Church, in the centre of Wellclose Square, mission schools have been recently erected. On the clock tower there is another ship, lying at anchor, looking sadly out of its element; but it points out changes in the wind with as much accuracy as if it were indicating changes in the tide.

If it had been our intention to act as guide, or philosopher, or even historian, we might ask the reader (having first taken him to other squares in the east end of London, of surprising age and fame) to follow us to Crosby Square: and having placed him somewhere about the centre, where he could obtain a view of an oriel window belonging to Crosby Hall, might mount the rostrum and spout pages of history. In like manner we should visit Trinity Square, and learn something about the Tower. In Finsbury Square we should take Moorfields, as it was once called, as our central motive. Such a treatment of old city squares might prove interesting; but it would fill a bulky volume.

On the east side of Aldersgate—in the neighbourhood of the Barbican, a neighbourhood in which Milton lived and died—there is an old spot called Bridgewater Square, perhaps the quietest, the most gloomy and deserted, of the city squares. The inhabitants appear to be always away, as though the principal business of their lives was to take a holiday. The pavement is strewn with handboxes, like luggage which they have forgotten to take with them; and if we look up into the windows, or down into the cellars, we also perceive handboxes there. In fact the square itself is not unlike a handbox, with a dozen trees carefully packed away in the centre, and a handful of gravel thrown in to keep them in their place. If this square was once fashionable (and according to historians it once was) all traces of its vogue, like the grass which formerly grew there, have disappeared.

On the west side of Aldersgate, in the neighbourhood of the great Clerkenwell Meat Market, is Charterhouse Square, by far the most picturesque square in London. Entering from the west by one of the iron gateways, the eye is at once attracted towards the old wall on the north side, with the antique monastic build-

ings rising up behind it, the stonework grey in some places and black in others, but everywhere weatherbeaten, like the head of an old sailor who has passed through many storms. In this ancient wall there is a gateway—the original entrance to the monastery—a Tudor arch, dating back probably to the early part of the sixteenth century. Two lions grotesquely carved support a shelf above this arch: they are very hungry-looking lions, mere skeletons, who seem to have no prospect in life. When Carthusian monks were continually passing to and fro beneath them, they had expectations; but now there is nothing for the fancy to feed upon—except the perfume from Clerkenwell Meat Market, a perfume which may explain the savage expression upon their worn and ghastly faces. On the other side of Charterhouse Square there is a row of old red brick houses, but looking younger and more warm and cheerful from standing opposite to the monastery, as the monastery gains in its appearance of age from facing them. In the centre of the square there is an avenue of light-leaved limes, shading the grass of deeper green which grows thickly beneath. There are seats under these trees. Do those who sit there ponder over the past ages—do they picture to themselves this old city square as it appeared five hundred years ago? There is not a place in all London where one can compare more appropriately romance with reality, the poetry of life with its prosaic surroundings. The site of the present Charterhouse formed the principal burial-places during the pestilence which broke out in the fourteenth century. The land was known as No Man's Land, 'which,' as Stow says, 'remained until our time by the name of Pardon Churchyard, and served for such as desperately ended their lives or were executed for felonies. A chapel was built in about the centre of the present square, where masses were offered for the souls of those who had died from the plague.' The monastery was founded in 1371, on this Pest-house Field, by Sir Walter Manny, knight of the garter, in the reign of Edward III. It was altered into a residence about the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The queen stayed there at the time of her accession to the throne. As Charles Knight truly remarks, 'it was a place of peace and war, of bloodshed and benevolence.' The last prior was executed at Tyburn in 1535, his head set on London Bridge, and one of his limbs over the gateway of his own convent.

Out of Fleet Street there are two squares which, from a literary point of view, have a peculiar interest: on the south side Salisbury Square, on the north side Gough Square. The change which has come over Salisbury Square, since Richardson's time, appears considerable, at a first glance. The whole of the river side of the

square is occupied by a hotel. This hotel, handsome enough in its modern way, seems to be staring all the other houses out of countenance, as though they were poor relations who ought to be ashamed of looking so shabby. But upon close inspection the quiet and retiring old buildings appear to throw the new hotel into the shade, like paintings by an old master placed side by side with a modern picture. In Salisbury Square Richardson spent part of his town life, and wrote his earliest work, 'Pamela.' 'Probably a good part of his works were composed here as well as at Fulham,' says Leigh Hunt, in his 'Town,' 'for the pen was never out of his hand.' Johnson was among his visitors; and he confessed to Boswell that, although he never sought after anybody, Richardson was an exception. Another of his visitors was Hogarth. Writing to Mrs. Barbauld, a lady says of Richardson: 'My first recollection of him was in his house in Salisbury Square, and of being admitted as a playful child into his study. I recollect that he used to drop in at my father's, for we lived nearly opposite, late in the evening to supper; when, as he would say, he had worked as long as his eyes and nerves would let him.'

There is little or no difference in the appearance of Gough Square since the time when Johnson lived there, except the difference in smoke and dust which has been accumulating at compound interest. The square is an oblong paved court, and forms a sort of ventilating shaft to several tributary courts or alleys. All the houses opposite to each other have a strong family likeness, as though they had caught the same architectural expression from standing face to face for so many years: the same shaped windows with the same shaped shutters, painted black by the artistic hand of time with many coatings of the same colour; the same shaped doors with heavy protruding shelves above them, looking as though they were waiting for lexicons of the English language to be placed there as monuments. 'In Bolt Court Johnson had a garden, and perhaps in Johnson's Court, and Gough Square: which we mention,' says Leigh Hunt, 'to show how tranquil and removed these places were, and convenient for a student who wished nevertheless to have the bustle of London at hand.'

So are these old city squares, and courts, and alleys, at the present hour: tranquil and removed from the noise of London life. But they are no longer places for the student to dwell in so much as for the historian, the biographer, or the romance-writer to visit now. They have had their day. Their history is begun and ended; we read it on the walls as plainly as we read the face of man.

## The Admiral's Ward.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE day after Mrs. Crewe's new inmates had arrived, there was an entertainment of some importance (at least, in the host's estimation) at Mr. Trent's handsome comfortable residence in Cleveland Square.

It was not a solemn festivity, such as he felt it his duty to hold three or four times in a season, to which were bidden chiefly professional equals and some of his leading counsel.

This, he was secretly satisfied to think, was more of a family affair. Yet it included a baronet of ancient lineage, a banker of high repute, a distinguished Indian officer, and a man of good position among the landed gentry, with ladies to match, besides one unmatched, or rather unmated, China merchant with several lacs, and a liver.

Mr. Trent was, on the whole, a good specimen of a prosperous professional man. He was a gentleman, and his father before him had been a professional gentleman. He was an honourable man, with a decently good temper and a circulation not too rapid, who, preserved by circumstances and temperament, had never meddled with 'things common or unclean.' Yet he had committed the incongruity of making what was considered a love-match—that is, he had married the daughter of a rising barrister into whose company he was thrown a good deal by business; but the barrister died before he achieved fortune, and the family were scattered.

Mrs. Trent, *née* Kate Piers, was a handsome blonde inclined to 'embonpoint,' with a bright face and pleasant manners, frank, laughter-loving, and intelligent. Mr. Trent was quite satisfied with his bargain, but was clearly of opinion that his wife received to the full as much as she bestowed; he was, therefore, more coolly approving than enthusiastic, and never hesitated to express in sharp decisive sentences any disapprobation suggested by domestic arrangements or expenses, though far too sensible a man to be a niggard.

Still, with all his mental breadth, he could not shake off the influence of his training and associations, and it was with a sense



of satisfaction, as we have said, that he descended from his dressing-room, on the evening in question, half regretting that he had not an opportunity of reassuring himself by a few words with his wife that the iced cup was abundant, and that the best champagne was in the coolers. He had been detained at the office, and some of his guests had already arrived.

On opening the drawing-room door, he found Mrs. Trent showing the last photographs of her two youngest children to her brother and sister-in-law, Major and Mrs. John Piers.

'I thought it was to be quite a family party,' said Mrs. Piers, looking with some dismay at her hostess's dress of creamy white muslin and lace, with turquoise and diamonds at her throat, and fastening a coquettish tuft of blue ribbon in her hair, from which floated lace lappets.

'So it is, if five of one family can make it so. My principal security against completing the characteristics of such an assembly is that we are too great strangers to have any *casus belli*; a general fight is the usual ending when two or three of the same blood are gathered together. To be sure, there is a cousin of Mr. Trent's coming, a man of metal, who would help to keep the peace,' returned Mrs. Trent laughing.

'Dear me!' said her sister-in-law with a look of dismay, as if she almost anticipated fisticuffs; she was a simple little thing much younger than her husband, and familiar only with the manners and customs of Indian society. Mrs. Trent laughed again, and Mrs. Piers continued: 'You see, I thought that we should probably only meet that young something Piers—I forget his name, who dined here last autumn when we first arrived—and your own party—so I put on my black silk, which is scarcely a dinner dress.'

'I am sure it is a very pretty one, and that point d'Alençon is exquisite, it is my favourite lace.'

'Yes, it is very nice; I bought it in Paris when we were there last month. Now tell me, who are coming?'

'Well, first of all, there is Reginald Piers, who has become quite something and somebody since you met him, come into a fortune unexpectedly; his mother, a very charming person, and his sister, Lady Jervois, who was a beauty, but, though young, has gone off terribly; her husband, Sir Gilbert, who is—well, *not* charming. Then there is the Trent cousin, Mr. Cannon and his wife; he is really a great gun in the Banking Brigade; and our respected partner Mr. Thurston, who is devoted to me, I flatter myself; and oh, a Mr. Matthews, a man from China; I don't know him much,

but he does not seem to have acquired many celestial qualities, though I believe he has grubbed up a sufficiency of filthy lucre—that's all, I think.'

'And your daughter?' looking over to a slight ladylike, rather pretty girl, well-dressed, *coiffée, gantée*, and generally put out of hand, to whom her father and Major Piers were talking affably.

'Yes! Katie dines with us to-day, as it is not a state dinner.'

'She has grown a good deal since we were here,' began Mr. Piers. Further comments, however, were cut short by the announcement of Mr. and Mrs. Thurston, followed by the remaining guests, ending with Sir Gilbert and Lady Jervois and Mrs. Piers; whereupon entered a scrubby little man in an evening suit of some antiquity both as to cut and aspect; he had an upturned nose, stubbly whiskers, and a slightly bald head, yet his wide and somewhat loose-lipped mouth wore a perpetual grin of conceit and satisfaction difficult to account for; on his arm leant an elderly lady with silvery grey hair, too grey for her years, arranged in soft feathery curls on each side of her pale aristocratic face, and crowned by a graceful cap of rare white lace; a dress of rich black silk much trimmed with lace, and a large Spanish feather fan completed a figure widely different from her companion.

Lady Jervois followed: a slight, frail, graceful, little woman, with a shy anxious expression in her large blue eyes, prettily dressed in grey with black lace—a costume which suited her.

Mrs. Trent met them half-way from the door with a pleasant greeting. 'Very happy to see you, Mrs. Piers,' she said; 'I was but a girl when we last met, yet I am sure I should have known you again.'

'I can scarcely say as much,' returned the lady, smiling; 'but at your age change is for the better.'

'And you, Sir Gilbert! you have been a stranger to London for some time.'

'You see, I have had no Parliamentary humbug to call me from my preserves and farming, so I've been deuced glad to stick to the plough and the gun,' replied Sir Gilbert with a quick harsh laugh.

'Very likely! but you had no business to bury Lady Jervois alive.'

'Oh, she was welcome to come up to town if she liked.'

'I am sure I should have come, in her place! But, Mrs. Piers, Lady Jervois, let me introduce my brother, a cousin you have never met before,' &c. &c.; and the necessary presentations ensued;

then glancing round, Mrs. Trent perceived that the tale of her guests was not complete.

'Where is Reginald?' she asked; 'I thought he would come with you,' to Mrs. Piers.

'I have not seen him since yesterday. He is staying at the Langham, and we have taken a house in Mount Street, you know; but he will be here without fail. We were speaking of you yesterday, and——'

'Changed times for Master Reggie,' interrupted Sir Gilbert with a chuckle; 'from a clerk to a county magnate.'

'Magnate or no, we must not spoil our dinner for him,' said Mrs. Trent. 'Pray ring, Mr. Thurston! even in his 'prentis days he was not too punctual.'

The *convives* had, however, scarce taken their places when the tardy guest arrived.

'Ah! Reginald!' said Mrs. Trent as he came quickly up the room to shake hands with her; 'you see you have not yet acquired importance enough to be waited for,' and she smiled graciously upon him. Mrs. Trent, with her candid manner and pleasant ways, managed to colour the familiarity which once was slightly patronising with a tinge of elder sisterly partiality that conveyed a degree of subtle flattery, and yet did not suggest, even to self-love as sensitive as Reginald's, a suspicion that she was influenced by his change of fortune.

'I should think not,' he returned with a good-humoured smile; 'and I have a thousand apologies to offer, though not one good excuse. I really was engaged, and forgot to look at my watch.'

'Never mind! you have lost nothing; there is your place, between Mrs. John Piers and Katie. I am afraid you have been going to too many festive scenes—you look tired, Reginald.'

'No! I assure you I am by no means "a favoured guest," my invitations are not too numerous,' said Reginald, going round to his place and shaking hands with his mother and Mr. Trent as he passed.

'Oh! they'll come fast enough, as your merits become known,' said Sir Gilbert with a grin.

'When did you return to town?' asked Mr. Trent.

'About a week ago.'

And while a dropping fire of question and answer ran round the table, Mrs. Trent thought that Reginald looked pale and weary and altogether less radiant than when he had last dined with them before going down to Saltshire, to go through the pleasant process 'taking possession.'

'I suppose you don't care to visit the old shop even as our "respected client"?' said Mr. Trent, smiling, as the grave butler and his auxiliary forces were handing round the salmon and cucumber.

'No—yes—' returned Reginald, hesitating slightly while his colour deepened. 'That is,' with a smile, 'I have really very pleasant recollections of my office days, but somehow time slips away so fast, and so many fresh engagements turn up, that I seem to have no more time to myself than when I belonged to the famous firm. I dare say,' turning to Miss Trent, 'you too find, now that you are emancipated (you are out of Miss Barton's hands, for good, are you not?) then, do you not find you have quite as much to do as when you were enslaved?—eh, Katie?—I suppose I may call you Katie, as you are not absolutely out?'

'Oh! yes, if you like,' said Miss Trent, blushing.

'Sherry or 'ock?' said the butler in a confidential whisper.

'Sherry.' Then to his neighbour, 'Are you to burst on a dazzled world next spring? I think we ought to get up a Christmas party and a ball at Pierslynn this winter.'

'That would be very nice,' she said, colouring with pleasure, though a little confused by his notice; and Reginald continued to bestow all his talk upon her for a while during which the general conversation was intermittent, the company being well employed discussing the good things provided for them.

'No, no fowl, but bring me another slice of mutton. You are a sensible woman, Mrs. Trent, to give us mutton; one loathes lamb at this season of the year,' said Sir Gilbert to his hostess. 'By George! we have had lamb at every house we have dined at since we came to town. Not that we are overwhelmed with engagements; it's amazing how soon one drops out of one's set in London! Because I've not been in town for two or three seasons, not since I gave up Parliament, I believe everyone thought that I was dead and buried. The fellows at the Club who can remember me cry out, "Jervois, where the deuce have you come from!" as if I had no business to be alive—Gad, it is disgusting!'

'Yes! It takes a great deal to make a lasting impression on London society,' returned Mrs. Trent. 'I am flattered that you approve of my mutton. Have you any currant jelly, Sir Gilbert? I feel inclined to hide your plate from Mr. Trent with my fan; he considers mutton and jelly dangerously wintry and unorthodox at this season. But of course a lawyer is a good deal ruled by precedent.'

Sir Gilbert turned his light cunning eyes approvingly on his hostess; he was a hearty admirer of handsome women.

'Mr. Trent, like most of his trade, knows how to pick out the plums in more ways than one,' he said.

'I wish he were a good boy from the Jack Horner point of view,' said Mrs. Trent, laughing. 'But I fear he is not a sharp enough practitioner; I fancy you have dexterous thumbs yourself, Sir Gilbert!'

'Not I, by George! I don't think I have made many hits in my life. Look at the luck of that young Piers! Why, Hugh Piers might have married any day for these twenty years past or to come, and yet he kept single; so my precious brother-in-law steps into five thousand a-year; a deuced nice lot of savings,' he added with indescribable gusto, as though his mental nostrils sniffed them from afar.

'What an odious little brute he is!' thought Mrs. Trent, smiling pleasantly on him, while she replied sympathetically: 'There is something very nice about a large lump of money to take slices off when you want them.'

'Better slice very thin,' muttered Sir Gilbert, his mouth full of mutton. 'But young Piers will make ducks and drakes of it all: "Set a beggar on horseback," hey?'

'I don't think so, Sir Gilbert. He seems steady enough, and I am sure has behaved very sensibly and moderately ever since he came into the estate.'

'Ah! but he comes of a spendthrift lot. I know 'em. I've got my lady into pretty good training, but I wish you were to see Madame Piers there, trotting off to the Bond Street shops to rig herself out as the Dowager of Pierslynn! However, it's no affair of mine; Master Reggie will find out that five thousand a year is not Fortunatus's purse by-and-by!'

Sir Gilbert was a remarkably outspoken man. He was too thick-skinned to feel pricks himself, and consequently never hesitated to inflict them on his neighbours.

'Mrs. Piers has been an excellent mother,' said Mrs. Trent gravely, 'and she has had rather a hard life of it. I am glad Reginald appears so considerate of her.'

'A hard life! Gad, that's good!' cried Sir Gilbert, helping himself to devilled whitebait. 'Considering she has lived on the fat of the land at Ashley Grange for the last seven or eight years with nothing to do but to bother me for clothes for the poor, and soup kitchens, and the Lord knows what, pauperising my people and——'

'Is Lord Langford likely to succeed in the representation of your county, Sir Gilbert?' asked Mr. Thurston, interrupting the Baronet's domestic revelations.

'I don't know, Mr. Thurston, and I don't care,' he returned. 'I have washed my hands of politics. They don't pay in any sense. It is all very well for adventurers, fellows that have to push their way, to make stepping-stones of the Conservative interest, or Liberal principles; but I find enough to do to manage matters at home.'

'It is well that all country gentlemen are not of your way of thinking,' said Reginald. 'I confess I should like a seat in Parliament by-and-by.'

'I dare say you would; and to run a horse at Epsom, and keep a yacht at Cowes, and all the rest of it.'

'Political influence is a proper object of ambition,' said the Banker, who had scarcely spoken, 'and men of weight and property should not let it slip into the hands of men of straw.'

'These things right themselves,' said Sir Gilbert, tossing a bumper of champagne; and a pause ensued, the Baronet's abrupt contemptuous repudiation of politics and politicians acting as an extinguisher on the subject.

'Admiral Desbarres called after you left,' resumed Mr. Thurston, addressing his partner. 'I met him on the stairs, and took him into your room. He arrived from Germany yesterday, and has brought back his ward and her cousins.'

'I am afraid the Admiral is taking up a burden that will break his back,' returned the host. 'Champagne to Mr. Thurston, Peters. Try that wine, Thurston; I had it direct from Aï last November. You remember we were obliged to send to Troyes to look up evidence in the Bouverie will case; I took the opportunity to order some of the best brand in that district.'

'Who is Admiral Desbarres?' asked Lady Jervois, speaking almost for the first time in a soft timid voice. 'I seem to know the name.'

'He is one of the famous naval family of Desbarres. He has two brothers in the Navy; one, his junior, has only just retired, and is also an admiral; our friend, Admiral George Desbarres, is a man of extraordinary benevolence. He is by no means wealthy; nevertheless, he is always helping some one, and now he is going to adopt his ward, because she has lost her home, and her cousins because—well, I suppose because no one else will.'

'The other Admiral Desbarres used to command Archie Bertram's ship, when he was with the Channel fleet—don't you remember?' said Reginald, whose attention was by no means absorbed by his conversation with Miss Trent.

'Yes, I remember now,' returned Lady Jervois with a little more animation of tone and look than usual.

'Hum! he will land himself in the workhouse, and I shall be curious to see which of his *protégés* will take him out?' said Sir Gilbert, his loud grating voice drowning the aside between brother and sister.

'He is a fine old fellow,' cried Reginald, 'and desperately religious. I remember Mr. Fielden telling us at Cheddington that at one time he thought the Church of England too slow, and joined the Ranters, or the "Latter-day Saints," or some very fast sect.'

'My dear Reginald,' said his mother entreatingly, 'pray do not speak so flippantly on such subjects.'

'I wish Admiral Desbarres would be advised by us,' said Mr. Trent. 'He really undertakes too much.'

'Where has he placed Laura and the children?' asked Reginald, with some interest.

'Somewhere in the Westbourne district. I do not know exactly.'

'This ward of Admiral Desbarres is a sort of distant relation of ours,' continued Reginald, turning to his right-hand neighbour, Mrs. John Piers. 'And I used to know her in our boy-and-girl days, for I frequently spent my vacations at her uncle's house.'

'Dear me, that was very nice!' returned the lady; 'is she pretty?'

'No, certainly not pretty, but a deuced clever girl; quite a "comrade," you understand, though she was not so plucky as her cousin, little Winnie Fielden.'

'I think my papa, General Carden, used to know an Admiral Desbarres,' said Mrs. John Piers, blushing a little at drawing attention to herself, yet not sorry to parade her father the General.

'It was Admiral Stephen Desbarres,' remarked her husband.

'Will Miss ——,' asked Mrs. John Piers, pausing; 'Miss ——,'

'Piers,' supplied Reginald.

'Piers live with him? I dare say she will marry a naval officer.'

'Women's heads are always running on marriage,' said Sir Gilbert to Mrs. Trent, as he helped himself a second time to cheese *soufflés*.

'Well, considering the wretched position we hold in society, it is not to be wondered at,' returned Mrs. Trent, laughing; 'of no value without an 'o' in broad-cloth behind us.'

'Whose cash you fling about till you reduce him to nought,' growled the Baronet.

'Is it possible you believe us to be extravagant?' exclaimed Mrs. Trent with innocent wonder.

'Possible!' shrieked Sir Gilbert.

Meantime the Banker and Mr. Thurston talked finance, and Major Piers laid down the law on Indian affairs to Reginald, who seemed to listen, but was somewhat preoccupied; then Mrs. Trent gave the signal for retiring.

Reginald was the first to join the ladies, who were grouped, some round the best of modern refuges, the photograph album, some looking over Miss Trent's music, while Mrs. Trent and Mrs. Piers were talking together in a friendly way on a remote sofa. Lady Jervois was sitting alone turning over the pages of a gorgeously got-up book of Tyrolese scenery, with an expectant look on her sad nervous little face.

Reginald went straight to her.

'I could not manage to call before one, Helen,' he said in a low voice as he drew a chair beside her, 'but I have not forgotten my promise. Have you a pocket under all that lace?'

'Yes, dear Reggie,' she replied, with a slight quiver in her voice.

'Here, then, put this away before he comes up,' and he took a large thick envelope from his breast and passed it to her.

'There! I think it was a proof of brotherly love to spoil the set of my faultless garment with such a package,' he said laughing, while he moved his chair between his sister and the rest of the company. A quick, partly suppressed sob swelled her throat, as she seized the packet with nervous haste, feeling for her pocket so eagerly that she twice failed to find it.

'Keep yourself better in hand, Helen,' he went on in a low warning tone. 'Will this put you straight?'

'Yes, quite! You have given me life, Reginald!'

'Then, for heaven's sake, *keep* straight! I cannot do this again,' and Reginald's good-looking face contracted with an expression which it rarely wore.

'Trust me, I can and will keep right. I shall be able to endure now to the end, and if ever in any way I can repay——'

'I am very sure you will,' interrupted Reginald pleasantly.

'I will give you an opportunity some day, perhaps.'

There was a pause, and the packet having been successfully hidden away, Reginald pushed back his chair a little, and resumed.

'What have you been doing since yesterday? What has my mother decided?'

'Oh, she has nearly made up her mind to take that house at South Kensington. Sir Gilbert is anxious she should. He thinks as it is so near the Museum, it would be very nice for us—Sybil and myself—to come up for a few months every year—for her education, you know.'

'I dare say he does,' returned Reginald with a scornful smile,



'even if he shares expenses, which I shall take care he does; it will be a deuced good arrangement for him.'

'And what a charming one for us!' returned Lady Jervois, her face brightening up at the prospect.

'Poor little Nellie! You have had an awful hard time of it,' said Reginald compassionately. 'It may be better for you, now that I am able to play the part of your "big brother." But whatever you do, keep free of debt. It would give *him* such a pull over you, if he found it out; and remember, I shall have heaps of claims—claims you know nothing about—on my spare cash; I cannot help you again.'

'Believe me, I shall not require help,' said Lady Jervois in a low earnest voice. 'And oh! if I could convey to you an idea of the relief you have given me! God bless you, Reggie!'

'There, there!' he returned, pressing her hand hastily. 'Don't lose hold of yourself; perhaps you'll bring me luck. I will come and see you to-morrow.'

'Come to luncheon?'

'No, no. The worthy Baronet would expect me to bring my own slice of beef and pint of wine,' said Reginald, 'as he is in London lodgings, and buying his provisions per ounce. But I will look in after. I want you to come to Pierslynn for a fortnight or three weeks. I hear Sir Gilbert is going to have an economical debauch in Paris among the Palais Royal restaurants—dinners at a franc seventy-five, and fifteen-centime excursions on the imperial of the Passy trams; so you and my mother had better come and stay with me while he perpetrates these extravagances.'

'It would be very nice; but, Reggie, you need not be so witty at Sir Gilbert's expense; remember, you have spent a good many weeks at Ashley Grange, and had many a day's ride.'

'Quite true, Helen. If he hadn't spoilt your life, I would spare him; but——'

'Reginald,' said Mrs. Trent, interrupting them, 'you are really a good-for-nothing boy, never to have been to see me since you were at Pierslynn. I wanted to hear all about the place.'

'I dare say I have seemed negligent, Mrs. Trent, but you don't know what a heap of business I have had to attend to.'

'Business! Why, Mr. Trent says you have not appeared at the office either.'

'No, of course I have had a good deal to do with Fairfield and Thwaites, the Pierslynn solicitors.'

'Oh! indeed!' returned Mrs. Trent, making a mental note of his answer; 'well, tell me all about it—your castle and broad domains.'

'You must come and see for yourself, Mrs. Trent. I think

you will like the place. There is a rambling old house, not at all grand, but comfortable, and rather picturesque. There is a fine country round: Welsh hills springing up almost from the grounds, and the remnants of an old fortalice where our excellent ancestors used to store up the spoils they took from their neighbours. There is, they say, a good neighbourhood, and I must say the stables filled me with a keen delight. I am quite impatient to return to them.'

'That is all very nice. And tell me, Reginald, is the house in good order? and what are you going to do about an establishment?'

'Oh! I found a stately old dame in black silk with a huge bunch of keys, and an elderly gentleman of clerical aspect, to whom the place seemed to belong much more than to me, both looking very glum; so, as everything was in apple-pie order, I made them a speech requesting they would remain, and serve me as well as they appeared to have done my predecessor, since which everything went well.'

'How long did you stay there?' asked Mrs. Trent; but the rather thin tremulous tones of Miss Trent's voice, upraised in an air of Schumann's, compelled them to silence.

Mr. Thurston, Sir Gilbert, Mr. Cannon, and Major Piers sat down to whist, and so postponed the hour of departure considerably beyond the usual time of breaking up; when Sir Gilbert rose from the card-table joyous and triumphant, the happy winner of four shillings and sixpence.

Some time previously, however, Reginald had made his excuses and taken leave.

'We are going to have another and more welcome change in the office,' said Mr. Trent, accompanying him to the door.

'Indeed! how so?'

'Holden tendered his resignation to-day. He wants, it seems, to join some relative in New Zealand or Sidney. I can't say I shall regret him; he was useful in some respects, but latterly he grew very unsteady. I fear *we* should have had to dismiss him, which would have been unpleasant. It is as well he should take the initiative.'

'It is,' returned Reginald, 'and he will be no great loss. Good-night. I shall call on you the day after to-morrow to discuss one or two matters. Good-night.'

## CHAPTER V.

MRS. CREWE'S happy and contented mood suffered no diminution during the first week of her new inmates' residence. The girls

were quite punctual, and perhaps a little too silent for their hostess's taste. Next to detailing her own affairs, Mrs. Crewe loved to hear the histories of other people. Still, she made large allowance for her young guests' depressing circumstances, and did not doubt that after a while they would, to use her own expression, 'put every confidence in her.'

Meantime, the complete change from all they had been accustomed to, though far from agreeable, helped both Winnie and Laura to throw off the first numbness of their grief.

After the Rectory, with its roomy old house and numerous out-buildings, and even the Dresden *étage*—which, if more limited, had exterior compensations in the shape of studios, galleries, and museums, where they might ramble together unquestioned and unmolested—life seemed curiously crippled and confined in Mrs. Crewe's suburban semi-detached villa.

Moreover, the neat well-kept surroundings, trim gardens and orderly white-muslin-curtained windows, bright brass handles, and general uniformity of the neighbourhood produced a sense of extreme weariness on the cousins; when, after an elaborate toilette, Mrs. Crewe took them for 'a walk abroad.' Herbert amused himself better. He rambled as far as the parks, and spent a few stray pence on omnibuses, from the top of which he enjoyed a bird's-eye view of the streets.

'I wonder if every day is to be the same, Laura?' exclaimed Winnie, one morning. She had been standing in one of the windows of their room, gazing upon without seeing the street below, and spoke abruptly out of her thoughts. 'I feel hopelessly idle, as if I never could take to anything again! Even if I could bring myself to bear the sound of music, the piano is so awfully out of tune, that it would be impossible to practise; and where in the world could *you* paint?—there is no room here; and Mrs. Crewe is so awfully afraid of things being spoiled downstairs, that I do not see how you are to manage it.'

'I think I could contrive to paint here,' said Laura, looking round.

'Then, there are scarcely any books in the house, and the whole thing is so hopelessly commonplace—one cannot mend clothes every day and all day long. I do hope the Admiral will call to-day—perhaps he will take us out. Come in!' exclaimed Winnie, interrupting herself, as a knock at the door made itself heard; whereupon the door opened, and Mrs. Crewe, in a washed-out but scrupulously clean dressing-gown of somewhat elaborate construction, sailed into the room, her favourite cat resting on her shoulder and a letter in her hand.

'Well, my dears! I hope you are getting your things straight. I am sure there is nothing so wretched as untidiness. Here, Winnie, is a letter from the dear Admiral—no mistaking his remarkable writing—so clear and even.'

'Oh, thank you, Mrs. Crewe!' cried Winnie, catching and opening it eagerly, while Mrs. Crewe continued to talk. 'I see you are very orderly, Laura. Would you like to have that large box put away? I have a nice box-room upstairs.'

'Thank you, Mrs. Crewe. It is very useful to keep things in.'

'Ah! I see. But I am going to get you another large chest of drawers *and* a table. I am only waiting for a sale which will take place in about ten days, at the corner house in this road. The room *is* bare at present,' looking round with an air of dignity and candour; 'but the notice was short, and between you and me and my precious Topsy here,' stroking the cat with airy jocularly, 'cash was *not* plentiful at the moment, or I should have made things nicer and prettier.'

'But these are very nice,' said Laura quickly, 'and we shall be *most* comfortable with another chest of drawers. Won't you sit down, Mrs. Crewe?'

'Thank you, dear,' settling herself for a gossip. 'I have never brought Topsy to see you since you came,' placing the cat in her lap. 'Look, my sweet! look at Laura's room! look at yourself in the glass.' The creature deliberately jumped down and began to inspect the apartment. 'It is the dearest, most companionable puss in the world. You will grow quite fond of her by-and-by. And now, dear,' continued Mrs. Crewe, 'let me see some of your German fashions. I confess I am always interested in dress, especially for nice young girls like yourselves.'

'But we have brought very little with us,' returned Laura. 'Winnie and I had only one mourning costume each. We made up these,' touching her skirt, 'out of some black dresses we had; German fashions are only French ones grown old.'

'Did you make those yourselves?' asked Mrs. Crewe, eyeing them critically. 'Very nicely made indeed; but, as you say, a little old-fashioned. Why do you wear that black frill round your throat, my dear? How much better Miss Fielden looks with a white one.' Mrs. Crewe considering Winnie a possible bird of passage, treated her with a little more ceremony than Laura.

'Oh! because it lasts longer,' said Laura good-humouredly, 'and there is no use taking too much trouble about *my* looks.'

'Not at all; care improves everyone,' returned Mrs. Crewe impressively, 'and you do not do yourself justice; you must let me——'

'The Admiral desires his compliments to you, Mrs. Crewe,' interrupted Winnie, who had come to the end of her letters, for there was one enclosed. 'He hopes you will allow him to come to tea, as he is engaged all to-day. I have a letter, too, from my aunt in Liverpool, Mrs. Morgan—and, Laura, she asks me to go and stay with her! It is very kind, and—oh! I do hope I may not be obliged to go! She is quite a stranger, and then I shall want heaps of things. I could not go as I am!'

'Of course, I shall be charmed to see my esteemed friend, Admiral Desbarres,' said Mrs. Crewe in her best tone. Then, with a little more eagerness, 'Your aunt in Liverpool—who is she?'

'Mamma's sister. I have only seen her once or twice, and did not like her much; but I dare say she is very good, and I believe her husband is very rich.'

'Well, she is decidedly friendly,' said Mrs. Crewe, with an air of dispassionate consideration, 'and you should not be too ready to reject what may prove an advantageous offer, my love! You will excuse my speaking; but I can truly say I feel a mother's interest in you both, not only for the Admiral's sake, but for your own. And Liverpool, if inelegant, is substantial. There is no knowing,' with a significant nod, 'what good luck you might find there. I would not refuse if I were you; but of course you will be guided by what the Admiral says. Just look at that dear Topsy; she has settled herself to sleep in the crown of your hat! she will not do it any harm, she is so gentle.'

'Oh! never mind,' said Winnie, making a slight grimace at Laura, behind the speaker.

'And now let us consult,' resumed Mrs. Crewe, returning to her seat, after having stroked and fondled Topsy; 'I am, though I say it myself, an excellent manager. Let us see, what would you require to make a good appearance at the table of these wealthy relatives? Another dress, more fashionably made and trimmed with crape. I see you have none on the dresses you brought with you, and crape—you'll excuse my saying it—crape is *indispensable*.'

'They do not wear it in Germany, and it is so dear there.'

'Yes, yes; but here you *must* have it. I dare say I could manage to get you a very pretty costume for four pounds.'

'Four pounds!' echoed Winnie, in despairing accents.

'And then,' continued Mrs. Crewe, evidently enjoying the prospect of buying and bargaining, 'you *might* do without another hat, though you *ought* to have one; and—you'll not mind my mentioning it?—but you must have a pair of boots. Those you brought with you are really a disgrace to your feet. I never

saw such things; why, they are half a yard square at the toes. Then, a mantle and a dinner dress—in such a house as your aunt's—you *must* have a dinner dress; fortunately, in mourning one does not want a variety.'

'Oh! there is nothing fortunate about mourning,' said Winnie, shaking her head.

'Then, there are gloves and ribbons and things. I am sure for twelve pounds I could supply you well with all necessities,' continued Mrs. Crewe, not heeding the interruption. 'Just let me see what you have already; you needn't mind me, my dears; my interest in you is sincere, and God knows I have seen ups and downs enough, and known what it is to be almost without a gown to my back.' Nothing short of her intense itching to handle the belongings of her young friends and dive into the recesses of the big box would have drawn this confession from Mrs. Crewe, who piqued herself on 'keeping up appearances,' but who on emergencies like the present was apt to reveal the secrets of the past in bursts of overflowing confidence. A little unwillingly, yet reluctant to seem unfriendly, Laura and Winnie submitted to a rigorous search—nothing escaped; and amid admiring ejaculations and high-pitched queries, she managed to extract the price, history, transformations, and migrations of every article they possessed. 'That is a beautiful portrait of your father, Laura,' she said, looking at a clever sketch in water-colour of an officer. 'In his uniform, too! It would look very nice in the drawing-room, and might be a comfort to you, my dear, to look at. It is a pretty frame, too.'

'Yes, it is very nice,' said Laura, quietly taking it out of her hands and wrapping it up again in its paper. 'Uncle Fielden said it was very like. I cannot remember: uncle and aunt Fielden were my real father and mother.'

'And I am sure they loved you as if they were,' cried Winnie hastily, with a sudden increase of colour, as if called upon to back up Laura in some way.

'Well, dears, it is nearly one o'clock,' said Mrs. Crewe, who had passed the morning entirely to her satisfaction. 'I must change my dress before dinner, so I shall leave you. Trust me, I shall represent what you require in a proper manner to the Admiral, and he will act—as he always does—handsomely.' She picked up Topsy and settled her on her shoulder.

'Indeed, indeed, you must do no such thing!' exclaimed Winnie. 'I have no claim whatever on him, I am not even his ward; and I should never dream of asking him for anything.'

'Well, we'll see,' returned Mrs. Crewe, smiling superior as she

opened the door. 'Laura, my dear, what does the Admiral like with his tea? I did think of pressed beef, but it is scarcely enough; a little pickled salmon would be just the thing, only there is no time. I am giving you a fore-quarter of lamb and peas for dinner to-day, to be cold to-morrow, as it is the girl's Sunday out. Some of that with the beef, etc. etc.'

'I am sure I do not know what the Admiral likes, Mrs. Crewe. I do not think he cares for anything.'

'Oh, everyone has his likings, only it takes some time to find them out. Dinner will be ready in about twenty minutes;' and with a kindly patronising nod, Mrs. Crewe went out and shut the door.

'I am so glad she is gone!' cried Winnie, seizing Laura somewhat violently by the shoulders and forcing her into a chair. 'I have been just dying to show you this letter. I don't like it; and there is one part,' pressing it open against her bosom, 'that might offend you as it has offended me; it is so mean. But I must talk to you about it, and you will not mind—will you, my own dear old Laura?'

'No; why should I mind what a stranger says?' cried Laura, a little wondering.

Kneeling at her cousin's feet and spreading the letter on her lap while she took one of her hands in hers, Winnie read as follows:—

'My dear Winifrid,—I should have written to you on your father's death had you announced it yourself, but it seemed to me rather negligent of you to employ your cousin to convey the sad intelligence. I was of course greatly shocked and surprised, for though he often talked of his health, we none of us believed there was much the matter with him. However, you are, I am sure, too well trained to repine at the Divine will; and, knowing that your dear father has made a good exchange, you must not give way to grief, which will only unfit you for your work here below. Both Mr. Morgan and myself are deeply grieved to hear, through your good friend Admiral Desbarres, that there seems to be no provision for you. It is really too dreadful. If all the money your father expended on your cousin had been invested, you might now have a nice little sum to fall back upon. I never could understand how your mother permitted him to adopt a niece—the child, too, of a marriage to which he *must* have been opposed for every reason. However, that cannot be helped now, and I am sure you must acknowledge that you really have no claim on Mr. Morgan. As to myself, I had no fortune of my own, and of course I cannot take my husband's money to give to my relatives; but while you are looking about you, I shall be very happy to have you with us for a few months, and I dare say you will get on very well with my girls.

I write also to Admiral Desbarres enclosing this, and you will of course be guided by his advice. If you accept my invitation, let me know at once when we shall see you. I shall be happy to pay your fare, second class, and will send someone to meet you at the station. Meantime, with all good wishes and kind regards, in which Mr. Morgan joins, I am your affectionate aunt,

‘E. MORGAN.’

Winnie ceased, and a pause ensued.

‘Isn’t it hateful?’ said she at last, looking a little anxiously into Laura’s face; ‘but you don’t mind?’

‘No,’ returned Laura slowly. ‘I don’t mind, but it is a sort of revelation to me of my uncle’s great goodness. He was so much like a father that I scarcely thought of him as a benefactor. Oh! no, Winnie, what Mrs. Morgan says does not hurt me, for we have all been like real brothers and sisters; but if I ever can pay back to you and Herbert what——’

She stopped, for her voice broke.

‘Yes, of course. It seems quite extraordinary that anyone should think of us as anything *but* sisters. You see, I did not want to give you the horrid thing to read while Mrs. Crewe was here. She is awfully curious, Laura, and I really believe can read what you are thinking, through the back of your head, especially if it is about money or dress or anything like that.’

‘Still, we ought to be very thankful to be with such a good-natured, kind-hearted person.’

‘Yes, I know, and she is such fun too. Oh! Laura, I long to sail across the room and imitate her with her “precious puss,” only it is too unfeeling of me to think of such things. But this letter, Laura: do you think I ought to go? Oh, I hope and pray not. Fancy staying with such a woman as Mrs. Morgan must be!’

‘It would be dreadful. We will hear what the Admiral says to-night. And, Winnie, what *are* we to do? We cannot go on living like this; we must try and help ourselves. Might we not teach? I can paint, and you can play. If we could only live here together and work, it would not be so bad.’

‘Ah, yes! Yet, how cruel it is to think that the dear father is lying in Dresden alone; he that we used to take such care of! It seems as if we had nothing to do now.’

Laura did not speak, but two big tears welled over and slowly coursed down her cheeks. ‘What is to become of Herbert too?’ she resumed. ‘I know the Admiral is trying to get him into some school, but how can we get him clothes, and railway fares, and oh, all sorts of things? I almost wish the dear Admiral *would* tell us a little what he intends to do. But I don’t like even to think so.’



'Why not?' said Winnie a little rebelliously; and rising from her lowly position, she walked to the looking-glass. 'I know he is an angel of a man, and I love him. What beautiful eyes he has, Laura! still, he is not *us*; he can't know exactly what we want.'

'He thinks he knows what is good for us a great deal better than we do, but somehow there is something slavish in folding one's hands and letting one's life glide into another's grasp.'

'That's just what I think, Laura, only I cannot say it like you. However, we are bound to do what the Admiral desires, at any rate for the present. How much money have you, dear?'

'Four marks eighty-five pfennige. I suppose we can get them changed into English money; then, Winnie, my quarter will be due in about a fortnight; that will be nine pounds and some shillings.'

'And we shall have no one to spend it on but ourselves now!' sighed Winnie, with unhesitating appropriation—a retrospective acknowledgment which spoke volumes.

'No one, indeed!' echoed Laura.

A heavy thump at the door. 'Please come down to dinner,' said Collins outside. It was the voice of one weeping, and Winnie, who had been gazing at herself in the glass and carefully arranging a bow of black ribbon and an old-fashioned jet brooch which fastened the white frill Mrs. Crewe approved of, turned half round. 'Thank you,' she said, 'we will come directly;' adding in a subdued tone, with a low sweet laugh, 'Collins has been coming through the fire of tribulation, I imagine; I don't think she has a very easy time of it. Are you ready, Laura?'

'In a moment, Winnie; and do shut up your writing things and those letters. You never put anything back in its place.'

'Ah! I fear you will never get me into training; but then, Laura, I can put on my clothes and do my hair better than you do.'

'I know that,' returned Laura, with a slight involuntary sigh; 'but come, we must not keep Mrs. Crewe waiting.'

It was a genuine delight to that lady to place the best of everything within her means before her young guests, to load their plates, to press them to eat; and it was a real disappointment when they failed to consume what she provided.

Her enthusiastic appreciation of Winnie's good looks and pleasant manners knew no bounds. Laura she summed up as a nice good girl, 'a little cold and reserved perhaps, but will no doubt improve on acquaintance.' Such, at least, was her description of that young lady in a short confidential interview with her

next-door neighbour, Miss Brown; for Mrs. Crewe found her time fully occupied, while the speed at which Collins galloped up and down and to and fro, under the energetic spur of her mistress's exhortations, was almost alarming. 'How the poor creature escapes a broken neck is a miracle,' was Winnie's comment.

'Your brother has not come in yet,' said Mrs. Crewe as the two girls entered the little dining-room. 'It is really too bad. He will not get his dinner comfortably. A fore-quarter of lamb cannot be played tricks with; it must be done to a turn and served at the right moment. I will cut off his dinner. Collins will keep it hot for him; and, Collins, bring me my precious Topsy's plate. Collins!' in a tone of righteous wrath, 'how dare you appear to wait at table in *such* an apron? It would be intolerable even were I alone, but before these young ladies it is positively insulting! Go, my girl, go, go, go. There, I will pass the plates, but put on a clean apron before you appear in my sight.'

'Please 'm,' sobbed Collins, retiring overwhelmed, 'the laundress she have lost two of my best, and I hain't got another.'

'Now, don't answer me, Collins; it is a thing I cannot and will not endure. I shall speak to you afterwards. Ridiculous creature! she begins to cry if I look at her.'

'Laura, my love, let me send you this nice little rib. We will keep the shoulder for this evening. Dear, dear! that girl has never left a dish for it! Would you mind passing me that hand-bell, the regular bell is always breaking.'

'Let me go and tell her what you want,' said Laura good-naturedly, and rising from her seat; 'it will save her a journey upstairs.'

'No! no, pray do not trouble yourself, my dear; you really will spoil her, and I am sure I do not know what you will think of my *ménage*!'

'You need not trouble about that,' said Winnie, smiling, as Laura left the room. 'The kitchen and the dining-room doors were exactly opposite each other in Dresden, and we often helped to bring in the dinner.'

'Dear me! is it possible?' said Mrs. Crewe, who was anxiously struggling to separate the short bones without splashing gravy on the cloth; then, after success had attended her efforts, sitting down with a slight sigh, 'How many servants did you keep, my love? Thank you, Laura; do sit down and eat something. Is that girl coming? Oh, here, Collins!' as the afflicted slavey, still drowned in tears, her offending apron turned back in three-cornered fashion, appeared; 'come, come, hold the dish nearer! There, put that in the larder *directly*, Collins! on the left-hand shelf, mind.'

Take some mint sauce, Winnie—I really *cannot* call you Miss Fielden.'

'Pray do not,' returned the young lady.

'But you did not tell me'—persisted Mrs. Crewe, when the next break in her hospitable cares permitted—'you did not tell me how many servants you kept?'

'Only one,' said Winnie.

'And you were four in family, and saw company, you say? It must have been a tight fit! But then, no doubt, German servants are very different from the conceited young ladies *we* have to contend with; who think themselves as fine as their mistresses, and do not like to soil their hands!'

'They are troublesome in Germany too,' said Laura; 'they can work very hard, and would just as soon scrub the floors at seven o'clock in the evening as at any time, but they have no notion of method; you have to direct them perpetually.'

'Still, to live in the style you did with only one servant was wonderful management!'

'We did not live in any style,' cried Winnie, laughing, and then added with a sigh: 'But we were very, very happy!' and for a few minutes silence ensued. Then Mrs. Crewe observed:

'Ah! yes, young people like variety. There!' interrupting herself, as the sound of the door-bell reached them—'there is Herbert!'

'I will let him in,' said Winnie, jumping up and hurrying away.

'I declare you are the most obliging young creature I ever met,' exclaimed Mrs. Crewe, while she rang the hand-bell vehemently, thereby evoking the presence of Collins, who came in nearly head-foremost. 'There, there, Collins, bring a hot plate for Master Herbert; I will cut his dinner for him, then you can take away the lamb, and bring the tart.—Well, Mr. Herbert, where have you been?'

'I am very sorry to be so late, Mrs. Crewe but I strolled away as far as St. James's, and saw the guard mounted; then I fell in with a German nurse, as I came back through Kensington Gardens; she was looking for one of the children who had strayed away, and she could not speak a word of English; so I stopped and helped her. Thanks, Mrs. Crewe, that's a tremendous plateful, but I am awfully hungry.'

Then Mrs. Crewe attacked the tart, a delicious lightly browned flaky-looking tart, and distributed large helpings, finally exclaiming in a severe tone, 'Collins! bring me a plate, Collins! There,' she continued, heaping up a liberal supply—'there, eat that yourself, and never let me see such an apron again!' *Exit* Collins overpowered but consoled.

'They never can say that they are not well fed here,' added Mrs. Crewe defiantly: 'they' meaning generally the succession of domestics who had toiled in her service. 'And now, my dears, what are you going to do this afternoon? Would you like to go out?'

'I do not want to go out,' said Winnie sadly.

'Nor I,' added Laura.

'And it is boiling hot!' said Herbert.

'Then,' said Mrs. Crewe cheerfully, 'let us have a nice quiet afternoon, working and talking. I suppose you young ladies have some elegant fancy work on hand; I am reduced to darn my stockings—a work I detest.'

'If I might bring down my paint-box and things,' said Laura with hesitation, 'I could finish a note-book I have been doing for my guardian.'

'Certainly!' cried Mrs. Crewe with great readiness. 'I adore everything artistic.'

'And if you like, I will help you to darn your stockings,' said Winnie, leaning a little towards her hostess in the half-caressing manner peculiar to her; 'for I have no work of my own.'

'You are really a darling!' exclaimed Mrs. Crewe. 'We will have dinner cleared away as soon as Herbert has finished, and settle ourselves here, because (I did not mean to tell you, but I cannot keep it) I expect the tuner this afternoon; the instrument is a good one, but terribly neglected.'

'Oh, that will be delightful!' cried Winnie. 'I long to play, and yet I dread to hear the sound of the airs—the music my father used to love!'

'Very natural indeed,' said Mrs. Crewe. 'But you must endeavour, my love, to conquer these vain regrets.—Collins! Come and take away! Collins! She does not hear me!—an hysterical fantasia on the bell.'

'I do not think I have shown you my son's photograph,' said Mrs. Crewe, after Laura had settled her painting materials and recommenced the half-finished group of wild flowers on pale grey Russian leather which she designed for her guardian; and Winnie, with a basketful of stockings, had established herself on the sofa. Mrs. Crewe had drawn a stocking on one hand and then permitted it to repose on her lap. 'I do not think I have shown you my son's photograph.'

'Yes. Do you not remember the day before yesterday, when you took us into our room?' said Laura.

'Oh! *that* one!' in a disparaging tone. 'I mean the last, a coloured one, cabinet size. He gave it to me just before he went away. I will bring it;' and she left the room for a minute,

returning with a morocco case in her hand, which she opened and handed to Winnie.

'Is he not a handsome fellow? He has such fine eyes; and see, what a broad intellectual brow! He is, though *I* say it, wonderfully clever, and so naturally refined; while his devotion to *me* is something too sweet! Is it not a charming face?'

'Very nice indeed,' said Winnie kindly, looking at it for a moment and passing it on to Laura, while Mrs. Crewe took up her stocking again and stuck her needle into it.

Laura took the portrait and gazed at it with some interest. It represented a man of perhaps thirty, with certainly a broad forehead which seemed low from the mass of black hair that fell over it; dark, well assured, somewhat wistful eyes; and the rest of the features large and strong rather than refined; the embrowned countenance grave, almost stern. 'It is a resolute face, yet I should not be afraid of it,' said Laura thoughtfully, as she continued to look at the picture.

'Afraid!' echoed Mrs. Crewe. 'I should think not! He is the gentlest, quietest creature in a house.'

'Let me see,' asked Herbert, who was looking for a book among a few volumes of novels, travels, and essays which filled a bookcase between the windows. 'I would not like to vex him,' was the boy's comment. 'He looks like a fellow that could give you a thrashing if you deserved it. Is he in the Navy, Mrs. Crewe?' for something like a button and gold braid adorned his collar.

'No, I am sorry to say he is not,' sighed Mrs. Crewe, taking the photograph and looking long and earnestly at it. 'It has always been a mortification to me that he could not follow his father's profession. Captain Crewe was in the Royal Navy, you know. But he died when my dear boy was just old enough to want a great deal more in the way of education than *I* could give him; and then a kind friend got him a berth on board one of Duncan and Gibbs' ships—which it would have been a clear tempting of Providence to refuse—and so he went into the Mercantile Marine; but it was a bitter trial; though what the mercantile marine is to the country no words of mine can express: yet the officers do not take the position they ought.—Don't take so much trouble over that stocking, dear; it really is not worth it. The way they destroy things in the wash is abominable. But as I was saying, I could not give Denzil—his name is Arthur Charles Francis Denzil, after my mother's grandfather, Lord Denzil of Coomb; and that is a thing that annoys me; the other officers in Duncan and Gibbs' service are not well

bred. When they come up here to see my son, it is Denny here and Denny there, as if he was any low Irishman. Denis is quite a common name among the Irish.'

'Indeed!' said Winnie, examining another stocking.

Herbert took 'Ivanhoe' from its place and went away to read in the garden. There was a pause, during which Collins put in her head.

'Please 'm,' she said, 'there's a gentleman called as wants to repair the piano.'

'A gentleman!' repeated Mrs. Crewe with strong emphasis, as she rose with dignity, clearing her lap of cotton, scissors, &c. &c. 'When will you learn to speak correctly? Gentlemen don't go about with bags to tune pianos.'

'Anyways, 'm, he has a tail-coat and a top-hat.'

'That does not constitute a gentleman,' said Mrs. Crewe, sailing out of the room. 'There, Collins, do not answer, but go fetch a duster and a damp rag. Make haste, Collins, make haste!'

'Oh, Laura, is she not fun?' whispered Winnie. 'We are *in* for a chapter of Denny. He is very good, I dare say, but he looks like a smuggler, a sort of amiable Dick Hatteraick.'

'I like his face,' said Laura thoughtfully, leaning back to look sideways at her last touches, 'and he must be a good son to be so loved.'

Winnie made no reply, and darned in silence for some minutes.

'I do wonder what my fate will be,' she said at length. 'I long, yet dread, to hear what Admiral Desbarres will say.'

'I do not think he will want you to go to Liverpool,' returned Laura.

'I am afraid to hope so.'

Re-enter Mrs. Crewe. Discordant sounds from the next room.

'Now, my dears, we shall have a little music of an evening,' said Mrs. Crewe, resuming her seat. 'I delight in music; I used to play myself, but my dear father, who commanded the 5th Native Regiment for many years, and was a very distinguished officer, always said my ear was *too* correct; I had not patience to practise. However, I am longing to hear *you* play, Winnie! What were we talking of?—oh! Denzil. Yes, as I was saying, it was not in my power to give him those advantages which he deserved, but he is quite a bookworm. Those are all his books there. He was always fond of improving himself. I remember when he had the measles—he had measles very severely when he was about six years old. My sister and I—she came to help me nurse him, like a kind good creature as she was, and married a naval chaplain afterwards, who turned missionary, and after

preaching the Gospel in many climes, he was killed (and they say *eaten*) in the interior of Africa or some such place. Well, I assure you, that dear boy made us read "Little Arthur's History of England" quite through *five* times. I have never forgotten it. I have had a good idea of English history ever since: Alfred burning the cakes, you know, and Canute with the waves, and the citizens of Calais—though that is not *English* history exactly, and Richard the Third, and those poor little princes—horrid greedy wretch! and Ratimer and Lidley—I mean Latimer and Ridley—and all the rest of it. Oh! he was most persevering.'

'He must have been rather cruel to put you five times through that horrid little book,' said Winnie, smiling; 'I should never have had patience to read it over and over.'

'Oh! yes, you would,' said Mrs. Crewe with unconscious pathos, 'if you had such a dear brave patient boy—and as little to do with and amuse him as I had. Those were trying times, my loves! such as I trust you will never know; but I hope I never forgot, all through the worst of them, that I was the daughter and the wife of British officers, and tried to keep the appearance of a gentlewoman.'

'I am sure you did,' said Laura kindly, 'and I know how hard it is to keep up appearances. I am afraid it is rather waste of energy to do so.'

'No, that it is not,' returned Mrs. Crewe warmly. 'It just gives strength and courage to feel that you are holding your place where God put you, in spite of difficulties. I am conservative and aristocratic in my principles, and I have always managed with these principles to keep out of debt.'

'I am sure some of the most charming aristocratic English people we met in Germany were so deeply in debt that they could not return to England,' said Winnie, laughing.

'Theirs was not true aristocracy,' returned Mrs. Crewe loftily. 'But with these views, you can imagine how bitterly I felt putting a son of mine into the Merchant Service; but he seems very happy, and is getting on very well. He was promoted to be chief officer the voyage before this one, and I hope he will soon be captain. I rather expect him home in a month or six weeks. He has not had a very long voyage this time, only to the Cape with cargo and passengers. Ah! he will be pleased to find I have two charming girls to keep me company, for he was not at all satisfied when he left because I had taken a young man to board—a very respectable young man, who is one of Thurston and Trent's clerks—the Admiral's solicitors, you know; but he grew unsteady and irregular in his payments; then he wanted to bring in friends to supper!

He even took liberties, and tried to call my son "Denny," which of course was out of the question—Denzil soon settled that; at last he borrowed small sums and gave notice, but I have never seen him or any money since.'

'That is too bad,' remarked Laura sympathetically.

'Oh! I fancy he will pay me yet; I do not think he was bad-hearted—only thoughtless and—not a gentleman,' etc. etc.; and for a whole afternoon Mrs. Crewe talked and questioned and exclaimed in the largest capitals. She would not have had the talk all to herself, however, had not Winnie been a good deal occupied by conjectures as to what the Admiral would say on the momentous question of accepting her aunt's unattractive invitation. Whatever his decision, she felt she must be guided by it. His benevolence, her own helplessness, forbade her liberty of action; yet she shrank from the plunge into strange waters, and prayed to be delivered from coming in contact with her unknown relatives.

'I wish, dear,' said Mrs. Crewe to Laura a few hours later, 'that you would just look at the table and tell me if it is all right. I never attempted to entertain the Admiral before, and I do not know his tastes.'

'Nor do I,' returned Laura. 'I have never seen much of him till lately, since my dear uncle's death, and then he generally dined at the hotel. I think his tastes are very simple, and everything is very nice, Mrs. Crewe. Admiral Desbarres is a man for whom one would never put on fine things, or make a display; but indeed I hardly know him; he came but rarely to the Rectory, and I wrote to him about three times a year. I do not know how it is, though I love and revere him, I am not quite at ease in his presence.'

'I know,' said Mrs. Crewe, nodding her head sagaciously; 'I feel the same as if I were in church, and had my best bonnet on, and must not think profane thoughts. But how kind and generous he is!'

'Still, Laura, though he is so superior,' put in Winnie, 'I fancy he likes people to look nice, and I wish you would wear one of my white frills; it would be such an improvement.'

'Very well, Winnie,' replied Laura carelessly. The result of which assent was that Winnie took charge of her cousin's toilette, much to the improvement of her personal appearance.

The Admiral was a little late, for which he made a careful and distinct apology. He had been issuing from his hotel, when a young man—'your relative, Laura, Mr. Reginald Piers—came in, and I could do no more than turn back with him, as his



visit was an entirely gratuitous act of civility. I trust therefore, Mrs. Crewe, you will see that my want of punctuality was unavoidable. I told Mr. Piers after a few minutes that I was due here at seven-thirty, and he at once released me.'

'Pray do not mention it, Admiral; tea is not like dinner, and we are all well pleased to wait for *you*.'

But the Admiral's presence acted in a marvellous way upon the bubbling flow of Mrs. Crewe's talk, and the evening meal was more silent and quickly despatched than usual.

After the third cup had been universally declined, though the hostess assured them that there was still excellent tea in the teapot, Admiral Desbarres said very deliberately, 'Will you permit me to go into the next room with Laura and Winnie? I have some matters to speak about, the result of which I shall communicate to you afterwards.'

'Certainly, my dear sir! certainly!' replied Mrs. Crewe blandly, although disappointed at not being included in the privy council. 'I shall be waiting here whenever you want me.'

So Laura rose, and led the way into the drawing-room, which was Mrs. Crewe's most sacred shrine, and, though not too abundantly furnished, was cheerful and pretty, and sweet with mignonette and wallflowers.

The Admiral sat down on the sofa, Laura on a low chair opposite, and Winnie, after a moment's hesitation, said with a smile and a blush, 'May I sit by you?' The Admiral immediately held out his hand, and Winnie nestled to his side with her naturally caressing manner. 'We have several matters to discuss,' said the Admiral after a pause; 'your affairs, my dear Winifrid, are the most pressing. You have had a letter from your aunt? and as I have for the present taken the place of your guardian and nearest friend, I feel justified in asking to see it.'

'Yes, of course,' cried Winnie, rising to go and find it. 'I intended to show it to you; I am sure you will think it anything but kind;' and she went quickly away.

'She is a loving gentle child,' said the Admiral, looking after her kindly, 'but has all the hasty prejudice natural to youth. You, Laura, seem gifted with better and calmer judgment; you must assist me in guiding this impatient spirit.'

'Winnie is very bright,' said Laura in her usual low but clear refined voice, 'and has a good deal of natural insight; the letter is rather harsh.'

'I must read it myself and judge,' he replied, and kept silent till Winnie returned and placed it in his hands, watching him with undisguised anxiety while he slowly perused it.

The Admiral still kept silence, even after he had finished and returned the epistle to its envelope. 'It is deficient in kindness of tone,' he said at length; 'nevertheless, it is kind in reality. Your mother's sister offers you the shelter of her home, and for every reason it would be well to accept it!'

Winnie's eyes filled up and she shook her head.

'Reflect,' resumed the Admiral; 'she is your nearest of kin; you have a certain claim on her, and she on you; she is disposed to befriend you; if you reject her advance, you perhaps deprive yourself of a natural ally; if you go to her, you are very likely to touch her heart and convert her into a valuable friend. It is worth while to try your chance with these unknown relatives.' Another pause, during which two big tears rolled down Winnie's cheeks.

'It may be painful,' continued the general benefactor, 'but I am sure you must agree with me. I too have had a letter from Mrs. Morgan, somewhat in the same strain: she suggests what you have yourself thought of—that your education, your familiarity with foreign tongues, ought to be a means of support; she is probably right; but, my child, you are so young, so inexperienced, that I rather shrink from the idea of your going among strangers.'

'I am sure I would prefer real strangers,' ejaculated Winnie.

'Besides,' continued the Admiral, not heeding the interruption, 'I have a strong prejudice—I should rather say conviction—against women going forth to battle with the world; it is opposed to the Divine will, so far as we can trace it in natural laws. They have plenty of work, most useful work, placed before them; but let it be in private, and under the shelter of sufficient protection.'

'Yet it is disgraceful to women, as well as to men, to live on the bounty of others,' said Laura.

'Not so much,' he returned. 'You have rights, which no man of proper feeling can deny.'

'At all events, you think I ought to go to Liverpool?' said Winnie ruefully. 'I hoped I might stay here, and perhaps Laura and I could get pupils, or she might sell her pictures or copies, and I might translate things; for Mrs. Crewe is so kind, we feel quite at home with her, and both Laura and I are—' hesitation and blushes—'are ashamed of costing you so much.'

A tender smile spread over the Admiral's thoughtful face. 'You need not think of that; you are two fledglings God has given me to shelter; but Laura is really and legally my charge; while you, Winifrid, are just as welcome to my care and help; but I do not feel justified in withdrawing you from your relatives and natural protectors; they may be able to do more for you than I can. Therefore, while we try to ascertain if anything can be secured

for you from the wreck of your poor father's property, or otherwise arrange your future, you had better accept your aunt's invitation.'

'It will be terrible to part,' urged Laura.

'But we must,' added Winnie despairingly.

'It is not for ever,' said the Admiral with his kindest smile. 'I would not be harsh with you, Winifrid. If upon trial you find yourself unkindly treated, or that you fail in creating the tender motherly interest which blesses both giver and receiver, tell me frankly, and I will remove you; but you must give your aunt and her family a fair trial.'

'Oh! thank you, dear, dear Admiral,' cried Winnie, fairly bursting into tears; 'that is a gleam of hope, and I will do whatever you wish—whatever you wish!'

'All will be well if you are patient and faithful,' said the Admiral, taking her hand in both of his, which was his nearest approach to a caress. He was a self-sacrificing, self-controlled man, who scarce allowed himself to taste the honey of his own beneficence. 'And now that we have discussed these letters, which it would have been unfair to display to strange eyes, suppose you ask Mrs. Crewe to join us; I want to ask her if she can keep Herbert for the present. The holidays are at hand, and as his English is somewhat deficient, it would be well if some private lessons could be obtained for him.'

Need it be said with what grace and dignity Mrs. Crewe added herself to the 'friends in council'? but she was penetrated with regret at the idea of losing Miss Fielden; she had already begun to feel a mother's interest in her charming young friend. As to Herbert, the dear boy should be well looked after, and she thought her friend next door, Miss Brown, knew one of the masters of a large school close by, who often remained during the holidays, and might be glad to give English lessons. Really, Miss Fielden's departure would be quite a blow. When must she leave them? Next week! was not that rather quick? She (Mrs. Crewe) believed there were certain indispensable additions to dear Winifrid's toilette that must be provided.

'Indeed!' said the Admiral with sudden attention. 'Be so good as to let me know what money is requisite, and I will endeavour to supply it.'

'You know, my dear guardian, that there will be a little money of mine coming soon,' murmured Laura. 'I shall stay here; I shall not want anything.'

'My dear, I require that you leave your affairs in my hands for the present,' said the Admiral with authority.

And then Mrs. Crewe launched forth in voluble particulars as

to what was necessary for her charming young friend, till the worthy gentleman, bewildered by a torrent of terms he could not understand, mildly demanded a sum-total. This, after some contention, between the excess of Mrs. Crewe's computation and the more modest estimate of the young ladies, was finally adjusted, and then the Admiral was pressed to partake of wine and biscuit, and even a glass of 'grog;' Mrs. Crewe blandly observing that *she* understood a sailor's tastes, while Laura and Winnie stood aghast at the sacrilege of offering such a beverage to their exalted 'guardian angel.'

'Thank you, no,' said the Admiral, smiling. 'In early days I enjoyed my glass as heartily as most men, but this quiet sheltered life does not entitle me to such strong stimulants. I rarely taste spirits, and never touch anything after my evening meal. I had almost forgotten to mention, Mrs. Crewe, that my young acquaintance, Mr. Reginald Piers, requests permission to call upon you and his relative Laura, whom he used to know before she went to Germany.'

'Oh! of course, Admiral; any friend of yours will be most welcome.'

'Reginald Piers!' repeated Laura, the colour slowly, faintly coming to her cheek.

'Reginald Piers!' cried Winnie. 'I remember he used to be such a tease. Oh! I shall be so glad to see him.'

A few words of leave-taking, and the Admiral was gone.

'There was never such a charming, well-bred, true Christian,' said Mrs. Crewe, as she replaced the bottles she had hospitably set forth on the sideboard. 'But I wish you were not to go away, Winnie; you must try and come back as soon as you can. And who is Mr. Reginald Piers, my dears? Is he a first cousin, Laura?'

'Oh, no! third or fourth—I do not know exactly. He was at school with Dick—Winnie's eldest brother—and used often to spend the holidays with us.'

'He is very nice—or he used to be very nice,' added Winnie. 'He is older than Dick, and very clever, I believe. The last time he was at Cheddington he had just gone into some business or office in London. I wonder how the Admiral met him? But if you do not mind, Mrs. Crewe, I will go to bed; I feel quite heart-broken at the idea of going to this strange aunt. I cannot tell you how I dread it.'

'Well, we must only hope it will turn out for the best,' said Mrs. Crewe kindly, as she bid her young guests good-night; and as they ascended to their chamber, they heard her calling sonorously, 'Collins—Collins! where is Topsy? I have not seen her

the whole evening. I cannot go to bed unless that precious cat is safe.'

Arrived in their own quarters, poor Winnie quite broke down; she hung round Laura; she conjured up the most painful pictures of her own desolation when banished far from all she loved; she refused to be comforted, and when at last Laura persuaded her to go to bed, sobbed herself to sleep like a weary, disappointed child.

Then Laura drew forth her writing-case and sat down to make a few entries in her journal, which was a kind of confidant and companion to her, and though very still and quiet, large tears welled up and dropped upon the page; while she looked long and tenderly at the flushed cheek and parted lips of the sleeper, whose breath even yet quivered with the violence of her past emotion; and then from out her few treasures she took a case of photographs, and gazed at the well-known, well-loved faces of the aunt and uncle who had been as parents to her. Finally, she dwelt long upon the portrait of a young man—a bright bold face with the suspicion of a mischievous smile—a face that satisfied *her* ideal of manliness, intelligence, refinement; and while she gazed, she lived over again many a ramble through wood and field, many a joyous game of noisy play, many an eager argument, many a quieter talk when the boy's dawning ambition suggested air castles, to which she listened with delighted interest; and nearer memories still, recalled the last weeks they had spent together, which from some hidden cause had been imbued with such strange sweetness—sweetness her heart ached to remember; and then all was dark and dreary. Reginald Piers passed out of her life into the world of reality beyond her ken; change, and sorrow, and separation came, and she saw him no more. But he was coming!—coming of his own free will and unconstrained kindness! What joy to listen to that pleasant voice, to see those bright laughing eyes once more; if only—only she were not so plain and colourless, so little gifted with grace or loveliness! Oh! for even a shadow of Winnie's beauty—that beauty which her artistic soul loved and admired with a generous appreciative love.

'How weak, and foolish, and contemptible I am,' she murmured at last, hastily closing up the case, 'to waste my heart in such fruitless longings! Let me grasp what gifts I have, and make the most of them. Friendship is worth something; and at least it rests with myself to be like the king's daughter, "all glorious within."'

(To be continued.)

# BELGRAVIA ANNUAL.

CHRISTMAS 1881.

## Your Money or Your Life:

A TALE OF MY LANDLADY.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

### I.

WE should all have enjoyed our visit to Sir John's country house—but for Mr. Cosway.

And to make matters worse, it was not Mr. Cosway but We who were to blame. Our society repeated the old story of Adam and Eve, on a larger scale. The women were the first sinners; and the men were demoralised by the women.

Mr. Cosway's bitterest enemy could not have denied that he was a handsome, well-bred, unassuming man. No mystery of any sort attached to him. He had adopted the Navy as a profession—had grown weary of it after a few years' service—and now lived on the moderate income left to him, after the death of his parents. Out of this unpromising material the lively imaginations of the women built up a romance. The men only noticed that Mr. Cosway was rather silent and thoughtful; that he was not ready with his laugh; and that he had a fancy for taking long walks by himself. Harmless peculiarities, surely? And yet, they excited the curiosity of the women as signs of a mystery in Mr. Cosway's past life, in which some beloved object unknown must have played a chief part. When I asked my wife to explain what had led to this extraordinary conclusion, she answered with satirical emphasis, 'You don't look below the surface: *we* do.'

As a matter of course, the influence of the sex was tried, under every indirect and delicate form of approach, to induce Mr. Cosway to open his heart, and tell the tale of his sorrows. With the most perfect courtesy on that 'surface' of which my wife had spoken—and with the most immovable obstinacy under it—he baffled curiosity, and kept his supposed secret to himself. The most

beautiful girl in the house was, to my certain knowledge, ready to offer herself and her fortune as consolations, if this impenetrable bachelor would only have taken her into his confidence. He smiled sadly, and changed the subject.

Defeated so far, the women accepted the next alternative.

One of the guests staying in the house was Mr. Cosway's intimate friend—formerly his brother-officer on board ship. This gentleman was now subjected to the delicately directed system of investigation which had failed with his friend. With the most unruffled composure he referred the ladies, one after another, to Mr. Cosway. His name was Stone. The ladies decided that his nature was worthy of his name.

The last resource now left to our wives, daughters, and sisters was to rouse the dormant interest of the men, and to trust to the confidential intercourse of the smoking-room for the enlightenment which they had failed to obtain by other means.

They wisely began with the men who, in these modern days, are most easily reached by female influence—the men of mature age. Now, at last, my wife condescended to tell me what she and her friends had seen under 'the surface.' In plain words, they had collected evidence, by means of their maids, derived from the gossip in the servants' hall; and had then exercised their imaginations on the narrow field of discovery thus opened to them. The man that waited on Mr. Cosway had heard him sigh and grind his teeth in his sleep; and had caught him one morning, when he ought to have been shaving himself, kissing something which looked like a portrait in miniature. These mysterious circumstances and the conclusions to which they led, repeated with endless pertinacity, acquired a certain adventitious importance among us, due to the state of affairs in the house. The shooting was not good for much; the billiard-table was under repair; and there were but two accomplished whist-players among the guests. In our idler moments, and on our showery days, we drifted into discussing the mystery of Mr. Cosway. The younger men, beginning by laughing at us, ended in catching the infection of our curiosity, for want of a nobler social epidemic in the house. Little by little, we became (I am ashamed to say) as eager as the women themselves to lead Mr. Cosway into making his confession. At a late sitting over our cigars, it was decided that one of us should inform this in-offensive gentleman that he was answerable for a state of nervous irritability among the guests, which it would be downright cruelty on his part to prolong. Thereupon, the inevitable question followed. Would any person, possessed of the necessary resources of polite circumlocution, volunteer to make this announcement on

behalf of the rest? Nobody volunteering, we decided to select the victim by drawing lots. The lot fell upon me. On our next evening in the smoking-room, the disgrace of acknowledging to what extremities of ill-bred curiosity idleness and folly can lead persons holding the position of ladies and gentlemen, was to be mine.

I suffered under a sense of my responsibilities at intervals during the night; and, when we all met again in the morning, I brought a bad appetite with me to the breakfast-table. As we left our room, my wife tried to compose my mind. 'Don't worry yourself any more about it,' she said; 'leave it to luck.' I received this childish advice in sardonic silence. Before another hour had passed, it became my conjugal duty (and privilege) to express my gratitude and to make my apologies. Luck not only relieved me from all apprehension of offending Mr. Cosway, but actually used my wife as its chosen instrument!

The newspapers came in before we had risen from table. Our host handed one of them to my wife, who sat on his right hand.

She first looked, it is needless to say, at the list of births, deaths, and marriages; and then she turned to the general news—the fires, accidents, fashionable departures, and so on. In a few minutes, she indignantly dropped the newspaper in her lap. 'Here is another unfortunate man,' she exclaimed, 'sacrificed to the stupidity of women! If I had been in his place, I would have used my knowledge of swimming to save myself, and would have left the women to go to the bottom as they deserved!'

'A boat accident, I suppose?' said Sir John.

'Oh, yes—the old story. A gentleman takes two ladies out on the river. After a while they get fidgety, and feel an idiotic impulse to change places. The boat upsets as usual; the poor dear man tries to save them—and is drowned along with them for his pains. Shameful! shameful!'

'Are the names mentioned?'

'Yes. They are all strangers to me; I speak on principle.' Asserting herself in those words, my wife handed the newspaper to Mr. Cosway, who happened to sit next to her. 'When you were in the navy,' she continued, 'I dare say *your* life was put in jeopardy by taking women in boats. Read it yourself, and let it be a warning to you for the future.'

Mr. Cosway looked at the narrative of the accident—and revealed the romantic mystery of his life by a burst of devout exclamation, expressed in these words:

'Thank God, my wife's drowned!'



## II.

To declare we were all struck speechless, by discovering in this way that Mr. Cosway was a married man, is to say very little. The general impression appeared to be that he was mad. His neighbours at the table all drew back from him, with the one exception of his friend. Mr. Stone looked at the newspaper : pressed Mr. Cosway's hand in silent sympathy—and addressed himself to Sir John.

‘Permit me to make my friend's apologies,’ he said, ‘until he is composed enough to act for himself. The circumstances are so extraordinary that I venture to think they excuse him. Will you allow us to speak to you privately?’

Our host, with more apologies addressed to his visitors, opened the door which communicated with his study. Mr. Stone took Mr. Cosway's arm, and led him out of the room. He noticed no one, spoke to no one—he moved mechanically, like a man walking in his sleep.

For nearly two hours, we were left to exercise our ingenuity in attempting to account for Mr. Cosway's wonderful outburst of gratitude at the drowning of his wife, and Mr. Stone's mysterious defence of him. At the end of the long interval, Sir John returned alone to the breakfast-room. Mr. Cosway and Mr. Stone had already taken their departure for London, with their host's entire approval.

‘It is left to my discretion,’ Sir John proceeded, ‘to repeat to you what I have heard in the study.’ A general outcry interrupted the speaker. ‘Oh, pray let us hear it!’ Sir John smiled indulgently. ‘You shall hear it,’ he said, ‘on one condition—that you all consider yourselves bound in honour not to mention the true names and the real places, when you tell the story to others.’

I cannot honestly say that the art of unfolding the intricacies of a narrative was one of the accomplishments possessed by the master of the house. It is no act of presumption on my part, if I here undertake to improve on our host's method of telling the story—using no other concealments than those which we all readily bound ourselves to observe. The events which preceded and followed Mr. Cosway's disastrous marriage resolve themselves, to my mind, into certain well-marked divisions. Following this arrangement, let me relate :

*The First Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life.*

The sailing of her Majesty's ship 'Albicore' was deferred by the severe illness of the captain. A gentleman not possessed of political influence might, after the doctor's unpromising report of him, have been superseded by another commanding officer. In the present case, the Lords of the Admiralty showed themselves to be models of patience and sympathy. They kept the vessel in port, waiting the captain's recovery.

Among the unimportant junior officers, not wanted on board under these circumstances, and favoured accordingly by obtaining leave to wait for orders on shore, were two young men, aged respectively twenty-two and twenty-three years, and known by the names of Cosway and Stone. The scene which now introduces them opens at a famous seaport on the south coast of England, and discloses the two young gentlemen at dinner in a private room at their inn.

'I think that last bottle of champagne was corked,' Cosway remarked. 'Let's try another. You're nearest the bell, Stone. Ring.'

Stone rang, under protest. He was the elder of the two by a year, and he set an example of discretion.

'I am afraid we are running up a terrible bill,' he said. 'We have been here more than three weeks——'

'And we have denied ourselves nothing,' Cosway added. 'We have lived like princes. Another bottle of champagne, waiter. We have our riding-horses, and our carriage, and the best box at the theatre, and such cigars as London itself could not produce. I call that making the most of life. Try the new bottle. Glorious drink, isn't it? Why doesn't my father have champagne at the family dinner-table?'

'Is your father a rich man, Cosway?'

'I should say not. He didn't give me anything like the money I expected, when I said good-bye—and I rather think he warned me solemnly, at parting, to take the greatest care of it. "There's not a farthing more for you," he said, "till your ship returns from her South American station." Your father is a clergyman, Stone.'

'Well, and what of that?'

'And some clergymen are rich.'

'My father is not one of them, Cosway.'

'Then let us say no more about him. Help yourself, and pass the bottle.'

Instead of adopting this suggestion, Stone rose with a very grave face, and once more rang the bell. 'Ask the landlady to step up,' he said, when the waiter appeared.

'What do you want with the landlady?' Cosway inquired.

'I want the bill.'

The landlady—otherwise, Mrs. Pounce—entered the room. She was short, and old, and fat, and painted, and a widow. Students of character, as revealed in the face, would have discovered malice and cunning in her bright little black eyes, and a bitter vindictive temper in the lines about her thin red lips. Incapable of such subtleties of analysis as these, the two young officers differed widely, nevertheless, in their opinions of Mrs. Pounce. Cosway's reckless sense of humour delighted in pretending to be in love with her. Stone took a dislike to her from the first. When his friend asked for the reason, he made a strangely obscure answer. 'Do you remember that morning in the wood when you killed the snake?' he said. 'That's my reason.' Cosway made no further inquiries.

'Well, my young heroes,' cried Mrs. Pounce (always loud, always cheerful, and always familiar with her guests), 'what do you want with me now?'

'Take a glass of champagne, my darling,' said Cosway; 'and let me try if I can get my arm round your waist. That's all I want with you.'

The landlady passed this over without notice. Though she had spoken to both of them, her cunning little eyes rested on Stone from the moment when she appeared in the room. She knew by instinct the man who disliked her—and she waited deliberately for Stone to reply.

'We have been here some time,' he said, 'and we shall be obliged, ma'am, if you will let us have our bill.'

Mrs. Pounce lifted her eyebrows with an expression of innocent surprise.

'Has the captain got well, and must you go on board to-night?' she asked.

'Nothing of the sort!' Cosway interposed. 'We have no news of the captain, and we are going to the theatre to-night.'

'But,' persisted Stone, 'we want, if you please, to have the bill.'

'Certainly, sir,' said Mrs. Pounce, with a sudden assumption of respect. 'But we are very busy downstairs, and we hope you will not press us for it to-night?'

'Of course not!' cried Cosway.

Mrs. Pounce instantly left the room, without waiting for any further remark from Cosway's friend.

'I wish we had gone to some other house,' said Stone. 'You mark my words—that woman means to cheat us.'

Cosway expressed his dissent from this opinion in the most amiable manner. He filled his friend's glass, and begged him not to say ill-natured things of Mrs. Pounce.

But Stone's usually smooth temper seemed to be ruffled: he insisted on his own view. 'She's impudent and inquisitive, if she is not downright dishonest,' he said. 'What right had she to ask you where we lived when we were at home; and what our Christian names were; and which of us was oldest, you or I? Oh, yes—it's all very well to say she only showed a flattering interest in us! I suppose she showed a flattering interest in my affairs, when I woke a little earlier than usual, and caught her in my bedroom with my pocket-book in her hand. Do you believe she was going to lock it up for safety's sake? She knows how much money we have got as well as we know it ourselves. Every halfpenny we have will be in her pocket to-morrow. And a good thing too—we shall be obliged to leave the house.'

Even this cogent reasoning failed in provoking Cosway to reply. He took Stone's hat, and handed it with the utmost politeness to his foreboding friend. 'There's only one remedy for such a state of mind as yours,' he said. 'Come to the theatre.'

At ten o'clock the next morning, Cosway found himself alone at the breakfast-table. He was informed that Mr. Stone had gone out for a little walk, and would be back directly. Seating himself at the table, he perceived an envelope on his plate, which evidently enclosed the bill. He took up the envelope, considered a little, and put it back again unopened. At the same moment Stone burst into the room in a high state of excitement.

'News that will astonish you!' he cried. 'The captain arrived yesterday evening. His doctors say that the sea-voyage will complete his recovery. The ship sails to-day—and we are ordered to report ourselves on board in an hour's time. Where's the bill?'

Cosway pointed to it. Stone took it out of the envelope.

It covered two sides of a prodigiously long sheet of paper. The sum-total was brightly decorated with lines in red ink. Stone looked at the total, and passed it in silence to Cosway. For once, even Cosway was prostrated. In dreadful stillness, the two young men produced their pocket-books; added up their joint stores of money, and compared the result with the bill. Their

united resources amounted to a little more than one-third of their debt to the landlady of the inn.

The only alternative that presented itself was to send for Mrs. Pounce; to state the circumstances plainly; and to propose a compromise on the grand commercial basis of credit.

Mrs. Pounce presented herself superbly dressed in walking costume. Was she going out? or had she just returned to the inn? Not a word escaped her; she waited gravely to hear what the gentlemen wanted. Cosway, presuming on his position as favourite, produced the contents of the two pocket-books, and revealed the melancholy truth.

'There is all the money we have,' he concluded. 'We hope you will not object to receive the balance in a bill at three months.'

Mrs. Pounce answered with a stern composure of voice and manner entirely new in the experience of Cosway and Stone.

'I have paid ready money, gentlemen, for the hire of your horses and carriages,' she said; 'here are the receipts from the livery stables to vouch for me; I never accept bills unless I am quite sure beforehand that they will be honoured. I defy you to find an overcharge in the account now rendered; and I expect you to pay it before you leave my house.'

Stone looked at his watch. 'In three-quarters of an hour,' he said, 'we must be on board.'

Mrs. Pounce entirely agreed with him. 'And if you are not on board,' she remarked, 'you will be tried by court-martial, and dismissed the service with your characters ruined for life.'

'My dear creature, we haven't time to send home, and we know nobody in the town,' pleaded Cosway. 'For God's sake, take our watches and jewelry, and our luggage—and let us go.'

'I am not a pawnbroker,' said the inflexible landlady. 'You must either pay your lawful debt to me in honest money, or——'

She paused and looked at Cosway. Her fat face brightened—she smiled graciously for the first time.

Cosway stared at her in unconcealed perplexity. He helplessly repeated her last words. 'We must either pay the bill,' he said, 'or—what?'

'Or,' answered Mrs. Pounce, 'one of you must marry ME.'

Was she joking? Was she intoxicated? Was she out of her senses? Neither of the three; she was in perfect possession of herself; her explanation was a model of lucid and convincing arrangement of facts.

'My position here has its drawbacks,' she began. 'I am a lone widow; I am known to have an excellent business, and to have

saved money. The result is that I am pestered to death by a set of needy vagabonds who want to marry me. In this position, I am exposed to slanders and insults. Even if I didn't know that the men were after my money, there is not one of them whom I would venture to marry. He might turn out a tyrant, and beat me; or a drunkard, and disgrace me; or a betting man, and ruin me. What I want, you see, for my own peace and protection, is to be able to declare myself married, and to produce the proof in the shape of a certificate. A born gentleman, with a character to lose, and so much younger in years than myself that he wouldn't think of living with me—there is the sort of husband who suits my book! I'm a reasonable woman, gentlemen. I would undertake to part with my husband at the church door—never to attempt to see him or write to him afterwards—and only to show my certificate when necessary, without giving any explanations. Your secret would be quite safe in my keeping. I don't care a straw for either of you, so long as you answer my purpose. What do you say to paying my bill (one or the other of you) in this way? I am ready dressed for the altar; and the clergyman has notice at the church. My preference is for Mr. Cosway,' proceeded this terrible woman with the cruellest irony, 'because he has been so particular in his attentions towards me. The licence (which I provided on the chance a fortnight since) is made out in his name. Such is my weakness for Mr. Cosway. But that don't matter if Mr. Stone would like to take his place. He can hail by his friend's name. Oh, yes, he can! I have consulted my lawyer. So long as the bride and bridegroom agree to it, they may be married in any name they like, and it stands good. Look at your watch again, Mr. Stone. The church is in the next street. By my calculation, you have just got five minutes to decide. I'm a punctual woman, my little dears; and I will be back to the moment.'

She opened the door, paused, and returned to the room.

'I ought to have mentioned,' she resumed, 'that I shall make you a present of the bill receipted, on the conclusion of the ceremony. You will be taken to the ship in my own boat, with all your money in your pockets, and a hamper of good things for the mess. After that, I wash my hands of you. You may go to the devil your own way.'

With this parting benediction, she left them.

Caught in the landlady's trap, the two victims looked at each other in expressive silence. Without time enough to take legal advice; without friends on shore; without any claim on officers of their own standing in the ship, the prospect before them was

literally limited to Marriage or Ruin. Stone made a proposal worthy of a hero.

‘One of us must marry her,’ he said; ‘I’m ready to toss up for it.’

Cosway matched him in generosity. ‘No,’ he answered. ‘It was I who brought you here; and I who led you into these infernal expenses. I ought to pay the penalty—and I will.’

Before Stone could remonstrate, the five minutes expired. Punctual Mrs. Pounce appeared again in the doorway.

‘Well?’ she inquired, ‘which is it to be—Cosway, or Stone?’

Cosway advanced as reckless as ever, and offered his arm

‘Now then, Fatsides,’ he said, ‘come and be married!’

In five-and-twenty minutes more, Mrs. Pounce had become Mrs. Cosway; and the two officers were on their way to the ship.

### *The Second Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life.*

Four years elapsed before the ‘Albicore’ returned to the port from which she had sailed.

In that interval, the deaths of Cosway’s parents had taken place. The lawyer who managed his affairs during his absence from England wrote to inform him that his inheritance from his late father’s ‘estate’ was eight hundred a year. His mother only possessed a life interest in her fortune; she had left her jewels to her son, and that was all.

Cosway’s experience of the life of a naval officer on a foreign station (without political influence to hasten his promotion) had thoroughly disappointed him. He decided on retiring from the service when the ship was ‘paid off.’ In the mean time, to the astonishment of his comrades, he seemed to be in no hurry to make use of the leave granted him to go on shore. The faithful Stone was the only man on board who knew that he was afraid of meeting his ‘wife.’ This good friend volunteered to go to the inn, and make the necessary investigation with all needful prudence. ‘Four years is a long time, at *her* age,’ he said. ‘Many things may happen in four years.’

An hour later, Stone returned to the ship, and sent a written message on board, addressed to his brother-officer, in these words: ‘Pack up your things at once, and join me in the boat.’

‘What news?’ asked the anxious husband.

Stone looked significantly at the boatmen, and only answered, ‘Wait till we get on shore.’

‘Where are we going?’

‘To the railway station.’

They got into an empty carriage; and Stone at once relieved his friend of all further suspense.

'Nobody is acquainted with the secret of your marriage but our two selves,' he began quietly. 'I don't think, Cosway, you need go into mourning.'

'You don't mean to say she's dead!'

'I have seen the letter which announces her death,' Stone replied. 'It was so short that I believe I can repeat it, word for word:—"Dear Sir—We have received information of the death of our client. Please address your next and last payment, on account of the lease and goodwill of the inn, to the executors of the late Mrs. Cosway." There, that is the letter. "Dear Sir," means the present proprietor of the inn. He told me your wife's previous history in two words. After carrying on the business with her customary intelligence for more than three years, her health failed, and she went to London to consult a physician. There she remained under the doctor's care. The next event was the appearance of an agent, instructed to sell the business in consequence of the landlady's declining health. Add the death at a later time—and there is the beginning and the end of the story. Fortune owed you a good turn, Cosway—and Fortune has paid the debt. Accept my best congratulations.'

Arrived in London, Stone went on at once to his relations in the North. Cosway proceeded to the office of the family lawyer (Mr. Atherton), who had taken care of his interests in his absence. His father and Mr. Atherton had been schoolfellows and old friends. He was affectionately received, and was invited to pay a visit the next day to the lawyer's villa at Richmond.

'You will be near enough to London to attend to your business at the Admiralty,' said Mr. Atherton, 'and you will meet a visitor at my house, who is one of the most charming girls in England—the only daughter of the great Mr. Restall. Good heavens! have you never heard of him? My dear sir, he's one of the partners in the famous firm of Benshaw, Restall, and Benshaw.'

Cosway was wise enough to accept this last piece of information as quite conclusive. The next day, Mrs. Atherton presented him to the charming Miss Restall; and Mrs. Atherton's young married daughter (who had been his playfellow when they were children) whispered to him, half in jest, half in earnest, 'Make the best use of your time; she isn't engaged yet.'

Cosway shuddered inwardly at the bare idea of a second marriage.

Was Miss Restall the sort of woman to restore his confidence? She was small and slim and dark—a graceful, well-bred,



brightly intelligent person, with a voice exquisitely sweet and winning in tone. Her ears, hands, and feet were objects to worship; and she had an attraction, irresistibly rare among the women of the present time—the attraction of a perfectly natural smile. Before Cosway had been an hour in the house, she discovered that his long term of service on foreign stations had furnished him with subjects of conversation which favourably contrasted with the commonplace gossip addressed to her by other men. Cosway at once became a favourite, as Othello became a favourite in his day. The ladies of the household all rejoiced in the young officer's success, with the one exception of Miss Restall's companion (supposed to hold the place of her lost mother, at a large salary), one Mrs. Margery. Too cautious to commit herself in words, this lady expressed doubt and disapprobation by her looks. She had white hair, iron-grey eyebrows, and protuberant eyes; her looks were unusually expressive. One evening, she caught poor Mr. Atherton alone, and consulted him confidentially on the subject of Mr. Cosway's income. This was the first warning which opened the eyes of the good lawyer to the nature of the 'friendship' already established between his two guests. He knew Miss Restall's illustrious father well, and he feared that it might soon be his disagreeable duty to bring Cosway's visit to an end.

On a certain Saturday afternoon, while Mr. Atherton was still considering how he could most kindly and delicately suggest to Cosway that it was time to say good-bye, an empty carriage arrived at the villa. A note from Mr. Restall was delivered to Mrs. Atherton, thanking her with perfect politeness for her kindness to his daughter. 'Circumstances,' he added, 'rendered it necessary that Miss Restall should return home that afternoon.'

The 'circumstances' were supposed to refer to a garden-party to be given by Mr. Restall in the ensuing week. But why was his daughter wanted at home before the day of the party?

The ladies of the family entertained no doubt that Mrs. Margery had privately communicated with Mr. Restall, and that the appearance of the carriage was the natural result. Mrs. Atherton's married daughter did all that could be done: she got rid of Mrs. Margery for one minute, and so arranged it that Cosway and Miss Restall took leave of each other in her own sitting-room. The young lady appeared in the hall with her veil down. Cosway escaped to the road and saw the last of the carriage as it drove away. In little more than a fortnight, his horror of a second marriage had become one of the dead and buried emotions of his nature. He stayed at the villa until Monday morning, as an act of gratitude to his good friends, and then accompanied Mr. Atherton.

ton to London. Business at the Admiralty was the excuse. It imposed on nobody. He was evidently on his way to Miss Restall.

'Leave your business in my hands,' said the lawyer, on the journey to town, 'and go and amuse yourself on the Continent. I can't blame you for falling in love with Miss Restall; I ought to have foreseen the danger, and waited till she had left us before I invited you to my house. But I may at least warn you to carry the matter no further. If you had eight thousand instead of eight hundred a year, Mr. Restall would think it an act of presumption on your part to aspire to his daughter's hand, unless you had a title to throw into the bargain. Look at it in the true light, my dear boy; and one of these days you will thank me for speaking plainly.'

Cosway promised to 'look at it in the true light.'

The result, from his point of view, led him into a change of residence. He left his hotel and took a lodging in the nearest by-street to Mr. Restall's palace at Kensington. On the same evening, he applied (with the confidence due to a previous arrangement) for a letter at the neighbouring post-office, addressed to E. C.—the initials of Edwin Cosway. 'Pray be careful,' Miss Restall wrote; 'I have tried to get you a card for our garden-party. But that hateful creature, Margery, has evidently spoken to my father; I am not trusted with any invitation cards. Bear it patiently, dear, as I do, and let me hear if you have succeeded in finding a lodging near us.'

Not submitting to this first disappointment very patiently, Cosway sent his reply to the post-office, addressed to A. R.—the initials of Adela Restall. The next day, the impatient lover applied for another letter. It was waiting for him, but it was not directed in Adela's handwriting. Had their correspondence been discovered? He opened the letter in the street; and read, with amazement, these lines:—

'Dear Mr. Cosway, my heart sympathises with two faithful lovers, in spite of my age and my duty. I enclose an invitation to the party to-morrow. Pray don't betray me, and don't pay too marked attention to Adela. Discretion is easy. There will be twelve hundred guests. Your friend, in spite of appearances, Louisa Margery.'

How infamously they had all misjudged this excellent woman! Such was the natural conclusion at which Cosway arrived. He went to the party a grateful, as well as a happy, man. The first persons known to him, whom he discovered among the crowd of strangers, were the Athertons. They looked, as well they might,

astonished to see him. Fidelity to Mrs. Margery forbade him to enter into any explanations. Where was that best and truest friend? With some difficulty he succeeded in finding her. Was there any impropriety in seizing her hand, and cordially pressing it? The result of this expression of gratitude was, to say the least of it, perplexing. Mrs. Margery behaved like the Athertons! She looked astonished to see him, and she put precisely the same question, 'How did you get here?' Cosway could only conclude that she was joking. 'Who should know that, dear lady, better than yourself?' he rejoined. 'I don't understand you,' Mrs. Margery answered sharply. After a moment's reflection, Cosway hit on another solution of the mystery. Visitors were near them; and Mrs. Margery had made her own private use of one of Mr. Restall's invitation cards. She might have serious reasons for pushing caution to its last extreme. Cosway looked at her significantly. 'The least I can do is not to be indiscreet,' he whispered—and left her.

He turned into a side walk; and there he met Adela at last!

It seemed like a fatality. *She* looked astonished; and *she* said, 'How did you get here?' No intrusive visitors were within hearing, this time. 'My dear!' Cosway remonstrated, 'Mrs. Margery must have told you, when she sent me my invitation.' Adela turned pale. 'Mrs. Margery?' she repeated. 'Mrs. Margery has said nothing to me; Mrs. Margery detests you. We must have this cleared up. No; not now—I must attend to our guests. Expect a letter; and, for heaven's sake, Edwin, keep out of my father's way. One of our visitors whom he particularly wished to see has sent an excuse—and he is dreadfully angry about it.'

She left him before Cosway could explain that he and Mr. Restall had thus far never seen each other.

He wandered away towards the extremity of the grounds, troubled by vague suspicions; hurt at Adela's cold reception of him. Entering a shrubbery, which seemed intended to screen the grounds, at this point, from a lane outside, he suddenly discovered a pretty little summer-house among the trees. A stout gentleman, of mature years, was seated alone in this retreat. He looked up with a frown. Cosway apologised for disturbing him, and entered into conversation as an act of politeness.

'A brilliant assembly to-day, sir.'

The stout gentleman replied by an inarticulate sound—something between a grunt and a cough.

'And a splendid house and grounds,' Cosway continued.

The stout gentleman repeated the inarticulate sound.

Cosway began to feel amused. Was this curious old man deaf and dumb?

'Excuse my entering into conversation,' he persisted. 'I feel like a stranger here. There are so many people whom I don't know.'

The stout gentleman suddenly burst into speech. Cosway had touched a sympathetic fibre at last.

'There are a good many people here whom *I* don't know,' he said gruffly. 'You are one of them. What's your name?'

'My name is Cosway, sir. What's yours?'

The stout gentleman rose with fury in his looks. He burst out with an oath; and added the intolerable question, already three times repeated by others, 'How did you get here?' The tone was even more offensive than the oath. 'Your age protects you, sir,' said Cosway, with the loftiest composure. 'I'm sorry I gave my name to so rude a person.'

'Rude?' shouted the old gentleman. 'You want my name in return, I suppose? You young puppy, you shall have it! My name is Restall.'

He turned his back, and walked off. Cosway took the only course now open to him. He returned to his lodgings.

The next day, no letter reached him from Adela. He went to the post-office. No letter was there. The day wore on to evening—and, with the evening, there appeared a woman who was a stranger to him. She looked like a servant; and she was the bearer of a mysterious message.

'Please be at the door that opens on the lane, at ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Knock three times at the door—and then say "Adela." Someone who wishes you well will be alone in the shrubbery, and will let you in. No, sir! I am not to take anything; and I am not to say a word more.' She spoke and vanished.

Cosway was punctual to his appointment. He knocked three times; he pronounced Miss Restall's Christian name. Nothing happened. He waited a while, and tried again. This time Adela's voice answered strangely from the shrubbery in tones of surprise:—  
'Edwin! is it really you?'

'Did you expect anyone else?' Cosway asked. 'My darling, your message said ten o'clock—and here I am'

The door was suddenly unlocked.

'I sent no message,' said Adela as they confronted each other on the threshold.

In the silence of utter bewilderment they went together into the summer-house. At Adela's request, Cosway repeated the

message, and described the woman who had delivered it. The description applied to no person known to Miss Restall. 'Mrs. Margery never sent you the invitation; and I repeat, I never sent you the message. This meeting has been arranged by some one who knows that I always walk in the shrubbery after breakfast. There is some underhand work going on——' She checked herself, and considered a little. 'Is it possible——?' she began, and paused again. Her eyes filled with tears. 'My mind is so completely upset,' she said, 'that I can't think clearly of anything. Oh, Edwin, we have had a happy dream, and it has come to an end. My father knows more than we think for. Some friends of ours are going abroad to-morrow—and I am to go with them. Nothing I can say has the least effect upon my father. He means to part us for ever—and this is his cruel way of doing it!'

She put her arm round Cosway's neck, and lovingly laid her head on his shoulder. With tenderest kisses they reiterated their vows of eternal fidelity until their voices faltered and failed them. Cosway filled up the pause by the only useful suggestion which it was now in his power to make—he proposed an elopement.

Adela received this bold solution of the difficulty in which they were placed, exactly as thousands of other young ladies have received similar proposals before her time, and after.

She first said positively No. Cosway persisted. She began to cry, and asked if he had no respect for her. Cosway declared that his respect was equal to any sacrifice, except the sacrifice of parting with her for ever. He could, and would, if she preferred it, die for her, but while he was alive he must refuse to give her up. Upon this, she shifted her ground. Did he expect her to go away with him alone? Certainly not. Her maid could go with her, or, if her maid was not to be trusted, he would apply to his landlady, and engage 'a respectable elderly person' to attend on her until the day of their marriage. Would she have some mercy on him, and just consider it? No: she was afraid to consider it. Did she prefer misery for the rest of her life? Never mind *his* happiness: it was *her* happiness only that he had in his mind. Travelling with unsympathetic people; absent from England, no one could say for how long; married, when she did return, to some rich man whom she hated—would she, could she, contemplate that prospect? She contemplated it through tears; she contemplated it to an accompaniment of sighs, kisses, and protestations—she trembled, hesitated, gave way. At an appointed hour of the coming night, when her father would be in the smoking-room, and Mrs. Margery would be in bed, Cosway was to knock

at the door in the lane once more ; leaving time to make all the necessary arrangements in the interval.

The one pressing necessity, under these circumstances, was to guard against the possibility of betrayal and surprise. Cosway discreetly alluded to the unsolved mysteries of the invitation and the message.

‘Have you taken anybody into our confidence?’ he asked.

Adela answered with some embarrassment. ‘Only one person,’ she said—‘dear Miss Benshaw.’

‘Who is Miss Benshaw?’

‘Don’t you really know, Edwin? She is richer even than papa—she has inherited from her late brother one half-share in the great business in the City. Miss Benshaw is the lady who disappointed papa by not coming to the garden party. I was very miserable, dear, when they took me away from Mr. Atherton’s. She happened to call the next day, and she noticed it. “My dear,” she said (Miss Benshaw is quite an elderly lady now), “I am an old maid, who has missed the happiness of her life, through not having had a friend to guide and advise me when I was young. Are you suffering as I once suffered?” She spoke so nicely—and I was so wretched—that I really couldn’t help it. I opened my heart to her.’

Cosway looked grave. ‘Are you sure she is to be trusted?’ he asked.

‘Perfectly sure.’

‘Perhaps, my love, she has spoken about us (not meaning any harm) to some friend of hers? Old ladies are so fond of gossip. It’s just possible—don’t you think so?’

Adela hung her head. ‘I have thought it just possible myself,’ she admitted. ‘There is plenty of time to call on her to-day. I will set our doubts at rest, before Miss Benshaw goes out for her afternoon drive.’

On that understanding they parted.

Towards evening, Cosway’s arrangements for the elopement were completed. He was eating his solitary dinner when a note was brought to him. It had been left at the door by a commissioner. The man had gone away without waiting for an answer. The note ran thus :—

‘Miss Benshaw presents her compliments to Mr. Cosway, and will be obliged if he can call on her at nine o’clock this evening, on business which concerns himself.’

This invitation was evidently the result of Adela’s visit earlier in the day. Cosway presented himself at the house, troubled by natural emotions of anxiety and suspense. His reception was not

of a nature to compose him. He was shown into a darkened room. The one lamp on the table was turned down low, and the little light thus given was still further obscured by a shade. The corners of the room were in almost absolute darkness.

A voice out of one of the corners addressed him in a whisper :  
'I must beg you to excuse the darkened room. I am suffering from a severe cold. My eyes are inflamed, and my throat is so bad that I can only speak in a whisper. Sit down, sir. I have got news for you.'

'Not bad news, I hope, ma'am?' Cosway ventured to inquire.

'The worst possible news,' said the whispering voice. 'You have an enemy striking at you in the dark.'

Cosway asked who it was, and received no answer. He varied the form of inquiry, and asked why the unnamed person struck at him in the dark. The experiment succeeded; he obtained a reply.

'It is reported to me,' said Miss Benshaw, 'that the person thinks it necessary to give you a lesson, and takes a spiteful pleasure in doing it as mischievously as possible. The person, as I happen to know, sent you your invitation to the party, and made the appointment which took you to the door in the lane. Wait a little, sir; I have not done yet. The person has put it into Mr. Restall's head to send his daughter abroad to-morrow.'

Cosway attempted to make her speak more plainly.

'Is the person a man or a woman?' he said.

Miss Benshaw proceeded without noticing the interruption.

'You needn't be afraid, Mr. Cosway; Miss Restall will not leave England. Your enemy is all-powerful. Your enemy's object could only be to provoke you into planning an elopement—and, your arrangements once completed, to part you and Miss Restall quite as effectually as if you were at opposite ends of the world. Spiteful, isn't it? And, what is worse, the mischief is as good as done already.'

Cosway rose from his chair.

'Do you wish for any further explanation?' asked Miss Benshaw.

'One thing more,' he replied. 'Does Adela know of this?'

'No,' said Miss Benshaw; 'it is left to you to tell her.'

There was a moment of silence. Cosway looked at the lamp. Once roused, as usual with men of his character, his temper was not to be trifled with.

'Miss Benshaw,' he said, 'I dare say you think me a fool; but I can draw my own conclusion, for all that. *You are my enemy.*'

The only reply was a low chuckling laugh. All voices can be more or less effectually disguised by a whisper—but a laugh carries

the revelation of its own identity with it. Cosway suddenly threw off the shade over the lamp, and turned up the wick.

The light flooded the room, and showed him—His Wife.

*The Third Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life.*

Three days had passed. Cosway sat alone in his lodging—pale and worn: the shadow already of his former self.

He had not seen Adela since the discovery. The one way in which he could venture to make the inevitable disclosure was by letter. Through Mr. Atherton (to whom he had at once revealed his position) he was able to make inquiries at Mr. Restall's house. The answers simply informed him that Miss Restall was suffering from illness.

The landlady came into the room. 'Cheer up, sir,' said the good woman. 'There is better news of Miss Restall to-day.'

He raised his head. 'Don't trifle with me!' he answered fretfully; 'tell me exactly what the servant said.'

The landlady repeated the words. Miss Restall had passed a quieter night, and had been able for a few hours to leave her room. He asked next if any letter had arrived for him. No letter had arrived. If Adela definitely abstained from writing to him, the conclusion would be too plain to be mistaken. She had given him up—and who could blame her?

There was a knock at the street-door. The landlady looked out. 'Here's Mr. Stone come back, sir!' she exclaimed joyfully—and hurried away to let him in. Cosway never looked up when his friend appeared.

'I knew I should succeed,' said Stone. 'I have seen your wife.'

'Don't speak of her!' cried Cosway. 'I should have murdered her when I first saw her face, if I had not instantly left the house. I may be the death of the wretch yet, if you persist in speaking of her!'

Stone put his hand kindly on his friend's shoulder.

'Must I remind you that you owe something to your old companion?' he asked. 'I left my father and mother, the morning I got your letter—and my one thought has been to serve you. Reward me. Be a man, and hear what it is your right and duty to know. After that, if you like, we will never refer to her again.'

Cosway took his hand, in silent acknowledgment that he was right. They sat down together. Stone began.

'She is so entirely shameless,' he said, 'that I had no difficulty in getting her to speak. She so cordially hates you that she



glories in her own falsehood and treachery. In the first place, I may tell you that she has a certain right, if she pleases, to call herself "Miss Benshaw." She is really the daughter of the man who founded the great house in the City. With every advantage that wealth and position could give her, the perverse creature married one of her father's footmen. From that moment her family discarded her. With the money procured by the sale of her jewels, her husband took the inn which we have such bitter cause to remember—and she carried it on after his death. So much for the past. We may now pass over a long lapse of years, and get to the time at which you and I were on the South American station, beginning to think of the happy day when our ship would be ordered back to England. At the date at which we have now arrived, the last surviving member of her family—her elder brother—lay at the point of death. He had taken his father's place in the business, besides inheriting his father's fortune. The loss of his wife (leaving no children) rendered it necessary that he should alter his will. He deferred performing this duty. It was only at the time of his last illness that he had dictated instructions for a new will, leaving his wealth (excepting certain legacies to old friends) to the hospitals of Great Britain and Ireland. His lawyer lost no time in carrying out the instructions. The new will was ready for signature (the old will having been destroyed by his own hand), when the doctors sent a message to say that their patient was insensible, and might die in that condition. He did die in that condition. Your wretched wife, as next-of-kin, succeeded, not only to the fortune, but (under the deed of partnership) to her late brother's place in the firm: on the one easy condition of resuming the family name. She calls herself "Miss Benshaw." But as a matter of legal necessity she is set down in the deed as "Mrs. Cosway Benshaw." Her partners only now know that her husband is living, and that you are the Cosway whom she privately married. Will you take a little breathing-time? or shall I go on, and get done with it?"

Cosway signed to him to go on.

'She doesn't in the least care,' Stone proceeded, 'for the exposure. "I'm the head partner," she says, "and the rich one of the firm; they daren't turn their backs on Me." You remember the information I received—in perfect good faith on his part—from the man who now keeps the inn? The visit to the London doctor, and the assertion of failing health, were adopted as the best means of plausibly severing the lady's connection (the great lady now!) with a calling so unworthy of her as the keeping of an inn. Her neighbours at the seaport were all deceived by the

stratagem, with two exceptions. They were both men—vagabonds who had pertinaciously tried to delude her into marrying them in the days when she was a widow. They refused to believe in the doctor and the declining health; they had their own suspicion of the motives which had led to the sale of the inn, under very unfavourable circumstances; and they decided on going to London, inspired by the same base hope of making discoveries which might be turned into a means of extorting money. Their contemplated victim proved equal to the emergency. The attorney whom she had employed to manage the sale of the lease and goodwill of the inn was not above accepting a handsome private fee. He wrote to the new landlord of the inn, falsely announcing his client's death, in the letter which I repeated to you in the railway carriage on our journey to London; and he deluded the two inferior rogues, when they ventured to make inquiry at his office. You and I were deceived, in our turn, by the lawyer's letter. Your natural conclusion that you were free to pay your addresses to Miss Restall, and the poor young lady's innocent confidence in "Miss Benshaw's" sympathy, gave this unscrupulous woman the means of playing the heartless trick on you which is now exposed. Malice and jealousy—I have it, mind, from herself!—were not her only motives. "But for that Cosway," she said (I spare you the epithet which she put before your name), "with my money and position, I might have married a needy lord, and sunned myself in my old age in the full blaze of the peerage." Do you understand how she hated you, now? Enough of the subject! The moral of it, my dear Cosway, is to leave this place, and try what change of scene will do for you. I have time to spare; and I will go abroad with you. When shall it be?

'Let me wait a day or two more,' Cosway pleaded.

Stone shook his head. 'Still hoping, my poor friend, for a line from Miss Restall? You distress me.'

'I am sorry to distress you, Stone. If I can get one pitying word from *her*, I can submit to the miserable life that lies before me.'

'Are you not expecting too much?'

'You wouldn't say so, if you were as fond of her as I am.'

They were silent. The evening slowly darkened; and the landlady came in as usual with the candles. She brought with her a letter for Cosway.

He tore it open; read it in an instant; and devoured it with kisses. His highly wrought feelings found their vent in a little allowable exaggeration. 'She has saved my life!' he said, as he handed the letter to Stone.

It only contained these lines:—

‘My love is yours, my promise is yours. Through all trouble, through all profanation, through the hopeless separation that may be before us in this world, I live yours—and die yours. My Edwin, God bless and comfort you.’

*The Fourth Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life.*

The separation had lasted for nearly two years, when Cosway and Stone paid that visit to the country house which is recorded at the outset of the present narrative. In the interval, nothing had been heard of Miss Restall, except through Mr. Atherton. He reported that Adela was leading a very quiet life. The one remarkable event had been an interview between ‘Miss Benshaw’ and herself. No other person had been present; but the little that was reported placed Miss Restall’s character above all praise. She had forgiven the woman who had so cruelly injured her!

The two friends, it may be remembered, had travelled to London, immediately after completing the fullest explanation of Cosway’s startling behaviour at the breakfast-table. Stone was not by nature a sanguine man. ‘I don’t believe in our luck,’ he said. ‘Let us be quite sure that we are not the victims of another deception.’

The accident had happened on the Thames; and the newspaper narrative proved to be accurate in every respect. Stone personally attended the inquest. From a natural feeling of delicacy towards Adela, Cosway hesitated to write to her on the subject. The ever-helpful Stone wrote in his place.

After some delay, the answer was received. It enclosed a brief statement (communicated officially by legal authority) of a last act of malice on the part of the late head-partner in the house of Benshaw and Company. She had not died intestate, like her brother. The first clause of her will contained the testator’s grateful recognition of Adela Restall’s Christian act of forgiveness. The second clause (after stating that there were neither relatives nor children to be benefited by the will) left Adela Restall mistress of Mrs. Cosway Benshaw’s fortune—on the one merciless condition that she did *not* marry Edwin Cosway. The third clause—if Adela Restall violated the condition—handed over the whole of the money to the firm in the City, ‘for the extension of the business, and the benefit of the surviving partners.’

Some months later, Adela came of age. To the indignation





*'My heart is fain for a sweeter strain.'*

of Mr. Restall, and the astonishment of the 'Company,' the money actually went to the firm. The fourth epoch in Mr. Cosway's life witnessed his marriage to a woman who cheerfully paid half a million of money for the happiness of passing her life, on eight hundred a year, with the man whom she loved.

But Cosway felt bound in gratitude to make a rich woman of his wife, if work and resolution could do it. When Stone last spoke of him, he was reading for the Bar; and Mr. Atherton was waiting to give him his first brief.

NOTE:—That 'most improbable' part of the present narrative, which is contained in the division called *The First Epoch*, is founded on an adventure which actually occurred to no less a person than a cousin of Sir Walter Scott. In Lockhart's delightful 'Life,' the anecdote will be found as told by Sir Walter to Captain Basil Hall. The remainder of the present story is entirely imaginary. The writer wondered what such a woman as the landlady would do, under certain given circumstances, after her marriage—and here is the result.

### *The First Tryst.*

WILL he never come, my king,  
 With his stately tread,  
 And his voice like birds of spring,  
 And his sun-bright head,  
 The heart to claim that he made so tame  
 With the charm of the words he said?

I have waited so long, so long,  
 And the day grows old,  
 And harsh is the thrush's song,  
 And the sun seems cold,  
 For my heart is fain for a sweeter strain  
 And the warmth of blue eyes bold.

O branches, lift your leaves  
 And let me look!  
 Surely, or sight deceives,  
 Up from the brook  
 My love so true, with the eyes of blue,  
 Comes to my secret nook!

Now gone is fear, 'tis he!  
 And now methinks  
 'Twere almost best to flee—  
 My heart half shrinks—  
 I cannot flee, he holdeth me  
 Fast bound with love's light links!

## Pausodpne :

### A GREAT CHEMICAL DISCOVERY.

WALKING along the Strand one evening last year towards Pall Mall, I was accosted near Charing Cross Station by a strange-looking, middle-aged man in a poor suit of clothes, who surprised and startled me by asking if I could tell him from what inn the coach usually started for York.

‘Dear me!’ I said, a little puzzled. ‘I didn’t know there was a coach to York. Indeed, I’m almost certain there isn’t one.’

The man looked puzzled and surprised in turn. ‘No coach to York?’ he muttered to himself, half inarticulately. ‘No coach to York? How things have changed! I wonder whether nobody ever goes to York nowadays!’

‘Pardon me,’ I said, anxious to discover what could be his meaning; ‘many people go to York every day, but of course they go by rail.’

‘Ah, yes,’ he answered softly, ‘I see. Yes, of course, they go by rail. They go by rail, no doubt. How very stupid of me!’ And he turned on his heel as if to get away from me as quickly as possible.

I can’t exactly say why, but I felt instinctively that this curious stranger was trying to conceal from me his ignorance of what a railway really was. I was quite certain from the way in which he spoke that he had not the slightest conception what I meant, and that he was doing his best to hide his confusion by pretending to understand me. Here was indeed a strange mystery. In the latter end of this nineteenth century, in the metropolis of industrial England, within a stone’s-throw of Charing Cross terminus, I had met an adult Englishman who apparently did not know of the existence of railways. My curiosity was too much piqued to let the matter rest there. I must find out what he meant by it. I walked after him hastily, as he tried to disappear among the crowd, and laid my hand upon his shoulder, to his evident chagrin.

‘Excuse me,’ I said, drawing him aside down the corner of Craven Street; ‘you did not understand what I meant when I said people went to York by rail?’

He looked in my face steadily, and then, instead of replying to my remark, he said slowly, ‘Your name is Spottiswood, I believe?’

Again I gave a start of surprise. ‘It is,’ I answered; ‘but I never remember to have seen you before.’

'No,' he replied dreamily; 'no, we have never met till now, no doubt; but I knew your father, I'm sure; or perhaps it may have been your grandfather.'

'Not my grandfather, certainly,' said I, 'for he was killed at Waterloo.'

'At Waterloo! Indeed! How long since, pray?'

I could not refrain from laughing outright. 'Why, of course,' I answered, 'in 1815. There has been nothing particular to kill off any large number of Englishmen at Waterloo since the year of the battle, I suppose.'

'True,' he muttered, 'quite true; so I should have fancied.' But I saw again from the cloud of doubt and bewilderment which came over his intelligent face that the name of Waterloo conveyed no idea whatsoever to his mind.

Never in my life had I felt so utterly confused and astonished. In spite of his poor dress, I could easily see from the clear-cut face and the refined accent of my strange acquaintance that he was an educated gentleman—a man accustomed to mix in cultivated society. Yet he clearly knew nothing whatsoever about railways, and was ignorant of the most salient facts in English history. Had I suddenly come across some Caspar Hauser, immured for years in a private prison, and just let loose upon the world by his gaolers? or was my mysterious stranger one of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, turned out unexpectedly in modern costume on the streets of London? I don't suppose there exists on earth a man more utterly free than I am from any tinge of superstition, any lingering touch of a love for the miraculous; but I confess for a moment I felt half inclined to suppose that the man before me must have drunk the elixir of life, or must have dropped suddenly upon earth from some distant planet.

The impulse to fathom this mystery was irresistible. I drew my arm through his. 'If you knew my father,' I said, 'you will not object to come into my chambers and take a glass of wine with me.'

'Thank you,' he answered, half suspiciously; 'thank you very much. I think you look like a man who can be trusted, and I will go with you.'

We walked along the Embankment to Adelphi Terrace, where I took him up to my rooms, and seated him in my easy-chair near the window. As he sat down, one of the trains on the Metropolitan line whirled past the Terrace, snorting steam and whistling shrilly, after the fashion of Metropolitan engines generally. My mysterious stranger jumped back in alarm, and seemed to be afraid of some immediate catastrophe. There was absolutely no possibility



of doubting it. The man had obviously never seen a locomotive before.

‘Evidently,’ I said, ‘you do not know London. I suppose you are a colonist from some remote district, perhaps an Australian from the interior somewhere, just landed at the Tower?’

‘No, not an Austrian’—I noted his misapprehension—‘but a Londoner born and bred.’

‘How is it, then, that you seem never to have seen an engine before?’

‘Can I trust you?’ he asked in a piteously plaintive, half-terrified tone. ‘If I tell you all about it, will you at least not aid in persecuting and imprisoning me?’

I was touched by his evident grief and terror. ‘No,’ I answered, ‘you may trust me implicitly. I feel sure there is something in your history which entitles you to sympathy and protection.’

‘Well,’ he replied, grasping my hand warmly, ‘I will tell you all my story; but you must be prepared for something almost too startling to be credible.’

‘My name is Jonathan Spottiswood,’ he began calmly.

Again I experienced a marvellous start: Jonathan Spottiswood was the name of my great-great-uncle, whose unaccountable disappearance from London just a century since had involved our family in so much protracted litigation as to the succession to his property. In fact, it was Jonathan Spottiswood’s money which at that moment formed the bulk of my little fortune. But I would not interrupt him, so great was my anxiety to hear the story of his life.

‘I was born in London,’ he went on, ‘in 1750. If you can hear me say that and yet believe that possibly I am not a madman, I will tell you the rest of my tale; if not, I shall go at once and for ever.’

‘I suspend judgment for the present,’ I answered. ‘What you say is extraordinary, but not more extraordinary perhaps than the clear anachronism of your ignorance about locomotives in the midst of the present century.’

‘So be it, then. Well, I will tell you the facts briefly in as few words as I can. I was always much given to experimental philosophy, and I spent most of my time in the little laboratory which I had built for myself behind my father’s house in the Strand. I had a small independent fortune of my own, left me by an uncle who had made many successful ventures in the China trade; and as I was indisposed to follow my father’s profession of solicitor, I gave myself up almost entirely to the pursuit of natural philosophy, following the researches of the great Mr. Cavendish,

our chief English thinker in this kind, as well as of Monsieur Lavoisier, the ingenious French chemist, and of my friend Dr. Priestley, the Birmingham philosopher, whose new theory of phlogiston I have been much concerned to consider and to promulgate. But the especial subject to which I devoted myself was the elucidation of the nature of fixed air. I do not know how far you yourself may happen to have heard respecting these late discoveries in chemical science, but I dare venture to say that you are at least acquainted with the nature of the body to which I refer.'

'Perfectly,' I answered with a smile, 'though your terminology is now a little out of date. Fixed air was, I believe, the old-fashioned name for carbonic acid gas.'

'Ah,' he cried vehemently, 'that accursed word again! Carbonic acid has undone me, clearly. Yes, if you will have it so, that seems to be what they call it in this extraordinary century; but fixed air was the name we used to give it in our time, and fixed air is what I must call it, of course, in telling you my story. Well, I was deeply interested in this curious question, and also in some of the results which I obtained from working with fixed air in combination with a substance I had produced from the essential oil of a weed known to us in England as lady's mantle, but which the learned Mr. Carl Linnæus describes in his system as *Alchemilla vulgaris*. From that weed I obtained an oil which I combined with a certain decoction of fixed air into a remarkable compound; and to this compound, from its singular properties, I proposed to give the name of Pausodyne. For some years I was almost wholly engaged in investigating the conduct of this remarkable agent; and lest I should weary you by entering into too much detail, I may as well say at once that it possessed the singular power of entirely suspending animation in men or animals for several hours together. It is a highly volatile oil, like ammonia in smell, but much thicker in gravity; and when held to the nose of an animal, it causes immediate stoppage of the heart's action, making the body seem quite dead for long periods at a time. But the moment a mixture of the pausodyne with oil of vitriol and gum resin is presented to the nostrils, the animal instantaneously revives exactly as before, showing no evil effects whatsoever from its temporary simulation of death. To the reviving mixture I have given the appropriate name of Anegeiric.

'Of course you will instantly see the valuable medical applications which may be made of such an agent. I used it at first for experimenting upon the amputation of limbs and other surgical operations. It succeeded admirably. I found that a dog under

the influence of pausodyne suffered his leg, which had been broken in a street accident, to be set and spliced without the slightest symptom of feeling or discomfort. A cat, shot with a pistol by a cruel boy, had the bullet extracted without moving a muscle. My assistant, having allowed his little finger to mortify from neglect of a burn, permitted me to try the effect of my discovery upon himself; and I removed the injured joints while he remained in a state of complete insensibility, so that he could hardly believe afterwards in the actual truth of their removal. I felt certain that I had invented a medical process of the very highest and greatest utility.

‘All this took place in or before the year 1781. How long ago that may be according to your modern reckoning I cannot say; but to me it seems hardly more than a few months since. Perhaps you would not mind telling me the date of the current year. I have never been able to ascertain it.’

‘This is 1881,’ I said, growing every moment more interested in his tale.

‘Thank you. I gathered that we must now be somewhere near the close of the nineteenth century, though I could not learn the exact date with certainty. Well, I should tell you, my dear sir, that I had contracted an engagement about the year 1779 with a young lady of most remarkable beauty and attractive mental gifts, a Miss Amelia Spragg, daughter of the well-known General Sir Thomas Spragg, with whose achievements you are doubtless familiar. Pardon me, my friend of another age, pardon me, I beg of you, if I cannot allude to this subject without emotion after a lapse of time which to you doubtless seems like a century, but is to me a matter of some few months only at the utmost. I feel towards her as towards one whom I have but recently lost, though I now find that she has been dead for more than eighty years.’ As he spoke, the tears came into his eyes profusely; and I could see that under the external calmness and quaintness of his eighteenth century language and demeanour his whole nature was profoundly stirred at the thought of his lost love.

‘Look here,’ he continued, taking from his breast a large old-fashioned gold locket containing a miniature; ‘that is her portrait, by Mr. Walker, and a very truthful likeness indeed. They left me that when they took away my clothes at the Asylum, for I would not consent to part with it, and the physician in attendance observed that to deprive me of it might only increase the frequency and violence of my paroxysms. For I will not conceal from you the fact that I have just escaped from a pauper lunatic establishment.’

I took the miniature which he handed me, and looked at it closely. It was the picture of a young and beautiful girl, with the features and costume of a Sir Joshua. I recognised the face at once as that of a lady whose portrait by Gainsborough hangs on the walls of my uncle's dining-room at Whittingham Abbey. It was strange indeed to hear a living man speak of himself as the former lover of this, to me, historic personage.

'Sir Thomas, however,' he went on, 'was much opposed to our union, on the ground of some real or fancied social disparity in our positions; but I at last obtained his conditional consent, if only I could succeed in obtaining the Fellowship of the Royal Society, which might, he thought, be accepted as a passport into that fashionable circle of which he was a member. Spurred on by this ambition, and by the encouragement of my Amelia, I worked day and night at the perfecting of my great discovery, which I was assured would bring not only honour and dignity to myself, but also the alleviation and assuagement of pain to countless thousands of my fellow-creatures. I concealed the nature of my experiments, however, lest any rival investigator should enter the field with me prematurely, and share the credit to which I alone was really entitled. For some months I was successful in my efforts at concealment; but in March of this year—I mistake; of the year 1781, I should say—an unfortunate circumstance caused me to take special and exceptional precautions against intrusion.

'I was then conducting my experiments upon living animals, and especially upon the extirpation of certain painful internal diseases to which they are subject. I had a number of suffering cats in my laboratory, which I had treated with pausodyne, and stretched out on boards for the purpose of removing the tumours with which they were afflicted. I had no doubt that in this manner, while directly benefiting the animal creation, I should indirectly obtain the necessary skill to operate successfully upon human beings in similar circumstances. Already I had completely cured several cats without any pain whatsoever, and I was anxious to proceed to the human subject. Walking one morning in the Strand, I found a beggar woman outside a gin-shop, quite drunk, with a small ill-clad child by her side, suffering the most excruciating torments from a perfect remediable cause. I induced the mother to accompany me to my laboratory, and there I treated the poor little creature with pausodyne, and began to operate upon her with perfect confidence of success.

'Unhappily, my laboratory had excited the suspicion of many ill-disposed persons among the low mob of the neighbourhood. It was whispered abroad that I was what they called a vivisectionist;

and these people, who would willingly have attended a bull-baiting or a prize fight, found themselves of a sudden wondrous humane when scientific procedure was under consideration. Besides, I had made myself unpopular by receiving visits from my friend Dr. Priestley, whose religious opinions were not satisfactory to the strict orthodoxy of St. Giles's. I was rumoured to be a philosopher, a torturer of live animals, and an atheist. Whether the former accusation were true or not, let others decide; the two latter, heaven be my witness, were wholly unfounded. However, when the neighbouring rabble saw a drunken woman with a little girl entering my door, a report got abroad at once that I was going to vivisect a Christian child. The mob soon collected in force, and broke into the laboratory. At that moment I was engaged, with my assistant, in operating upon the girl, while several cats, all completely anæstheticised, were bound down on the boards around, awaiting the healing of their wounds after the removal of tumours. At the sight of such apparent tortures the people grew wild with rage, and happening in their transports to fling down a large bottle of the aneigeiric, or reviving mixture, the child and the animals all at once recovered consciousness, and began of course to writhe and scream with acute pain. I need not describe to you the scene that ensued. My laboratory was wrecked, my assistant severely injured, and I myself barely escaped with my life.

‘After this *contretemps* I determined to be more cautious. I took the lease of a new house at Hampstead, and in the garden I determined to build myself a subterranean laboratory where I might be absolutely free from intrusion. I hired some labourers from Bath for this purpose, and I explained to them the nature of my wishes, and the absolute necessity of secrecy. A high wall surrounded the garden, and here the workmen worked securely and unseen. I concealed my design even from my dear brother—whose grandson or great-grandson I suppose you must be—and when the building was finished, I sent my men back to Bath, with strict injunctions never to mention the matter to anyone. A trap-door in the cellar, artfully concealed, gave access to the passage; a large oak portal, bound with iron, shut me securely in; and my air supply was obtained by means of pipes communicating through blank spaces in the brick wall of the garden with the outer atmosphere. Every arrangement for concealment was perfect; and I resolved in future, till my results were perfectly established, that I would dispense with the aid of an assistant.

‘I was in high spirits when I went to visit my Amelia that evening, and I told her confidently that before the end of the year I expected to gain the gold medal of the Royal Society. The

dear girl was pleased at my glowing prospects, and gave me every assurance of the delight with which she hailed the probability of our approaching union.

‘Next day I began my experiments afresh in my new quarters. I bolted myself into the laboratory, and set to work with renewed vigour. I was experimenting upon an injured dog, and I placed a large bottle of pausodyne beside me as I administered the drug to his nostrils. The rising fumes seemed to affect my head more than usual in that confined space, and I tottered a little as I worked. My arm grew weaker, and at last fell powerless to my side. As it fell it knocked down the large bottle of pausodyne, and I saw the liquid spreading over the floor. That was almost the last thing that I knew. I staggered toward the door, but did not reach it; and then I remember nothing more for a considerable period.’

He wiped his forehead with his sleeve—he had no handkerchief—and then proceeded.

‘When I woke up again the effects of the pausodyne had worn themselves out, and I felt that I must have remained unconscious for at least a week or a fortnight. My candle had gone out, and I could not find my tinder-box. I rose up slowly and with difficulty, for the air of the room was close and filled with fumes, and made my way in the dark towards the door. To my surprise, the bolt was so stiff with rust that it would hardly move. I opened it after a struggle, and found myself in the passage. Groping my way towards the trap-door of the cellar, I felt it was obstructed by some heavy body. With an immense effort, for my strength seemed but feeble, I pushed it up, and discovered that a heap of sea-coals lay on top of it. I extricated myself into the cellar, and there a fresh surprise awaited me. A new entrance had been made into the front, so that I walked out at once upon the open road, instead of up the stairs into the kitchen. Looking up at the exterior of my house, my brain reeled with bewilderment when I saw that it had disappeared almost entirely, and that a different porch and wholly unfamiliar windows occupied its façade. I must have slept far longer than I at first imagined—perhaps a whole year or more. A vague terror prevented me from walking up the steps of my own home. Possibly my brother, thinking me dead, might have sold the lease; possibly some stranger might resent my intrusion into the house that was now his own. At any rate, I thought it safer to walk into the road. I would go towards London, to my brother's house in St. Mary le Bone. I turned into the Hampstead Road, and directed my steps thitherward.

‘Again, another surprise began to affect me with a horrible and ill-defined sense of awe. Not a single object that I saw was really familiar to me. I recognised that I was in the Hampstead Road, but it was not the Hampstead Road which I used to know before my fatal experiments. The houses were far more numerous, the trees were bigger and older. A year, nay, even a few years would not have sufficed for such a change. I began to fear that I had slept away a whole decade.

‘It was early morning, and few people were yet abroad. But the costume of those whom I met seemed strange and fantastic to me. Moreover, I noticed that they all turned and looked after me with evident surprise, as though my dress caused them quite as much astonishment as theirs caused me. I was quietly attired in my snuff-coloured suit of small-clothes, with silk stockings and simple buckle shoes, and I had of course no hat; but I gathered that my appearance caused universal amazement and concern, far more than could be justified by the mere accidental absence of head-gear. A dread began to oppress me that I might actually have slept out my whole age and generation. Was my Amelia alive? and if so, would she be still the same Amelia I had known a week or two before? Should I find her an aged woman, still cherishing a reminiscence of her former love; or might she herself perhaps be dead and forgotten, while I remained, alone and solitary, in a world which knew me not?

‘I walked along unmolested, but with reeling brain, through streets more and more unfamiliar, till I came near the St. Mary le Bone Road. There, as I hesitated a little and staggered at the crossing, a man in a curious suit of dark blue clothes, with a grotesque felt helmet on his head, whom I afterwards found to be a constable, came up and touched me on the shoulder.

‘“Look here,” he said to me in a rough voice, “what are you a-doin’ in this ’ere fancy-dress at this hour in the mornin’? You’ve lost your way home, I take it.”

‘“I was going,” I answered, “to the St. Mary le Bone Road.”

‘“Why, you image,” says he rudely, “if you mean Marribon, why don’t you say Marribon? What house are you a-lookin’ for, eh?”

‘“My brother lives,” I replied, “at the ‘Lamb,’ near St. Mary’s Church, and I was going to his residence.”

‘“The ‘Lamb!’” says he, with a rude laugh; “there ain’t no public of that name in the road. It’s my belief,” he goes on after a moment, “that you’re drunk, or mad, or else you’ve stole them clothes. Any way, you’ve got to go along with me to the station, so walk it, will you.”

“Pardon me,” I said, “I suppose you are an officer of the law, and I would not attempt to resist your authority”—“You’d better not,” says he, half to himself—“but I should like to go to my brother’s house, where I could show you that I am a respectable person.”

“Well,” says my fellow, insolently, “I’ll go along of you if you like, and if it’s all right, I suppose you won’t mind standing a bob.”

“A what?” said I.

“A bob,” says he, laughing; “a shillin’, you know.”

To get rid of his insolence for a while, I pulled out my purse and handed him a shilling. It was a George II. with milled edges, not like the things I see you use now. He held it up and looked at it, and then he said again, “Look here, you know, this isn’t good. You’d better come along with me straight to the station, and not make a fuss about it. There’s three charges against you, that’s all. One is, that you’re drunk. The second is, that you’re mad. And the third is, that you’ve been trying to utter false coin. Any one of ’em’s quite enough to justify me in takin’ you into custody.”

‘I saw it was no use to resist, and I went along with him.

‘I won’t trouble you with the whole of the details, but the upshot of it all was, they took me before a magistrate. By this time I had begun to realise the full terror of the situation, and I saw clearly that the real danger lay in the inevitable suspicion of madness under which I must labour. When I got into the court I told the magistrate my story very shortly and simply, as I have told it to you now. He listened to me without a word, and at the end he turned round to his clerk and said, “This is clearly a case for Dr. Fitz-Jenkins, I think.”

“Sir,” I said, “before you send me to a madhouse, which I suppose is what you mean by these words, I trust you will at least examine the evidences of my story. Look at my clothing, look at these coins, look at everything about me.” And I handed him my purse to see for himself.

‘He looked at it for a minute, and then he turned towards me very sternly. “Mr. Spottiswood,” he said, “or whatever else your real name may be, if this is a joke, it is a very foolish and unbecoming one. Your dress is no doubt very well designed; your small collection of coins is interesting and well-selected; and you have got up your character remarkably well. If you are really sane, which I suspect to be the case, then your studied attempt to waste the time of this court and to make a laughing-stock of its magistrate will meet with the punishment it deserves.”



I shall remit your case for consideration to our medical officer. If you consent to give him your real name and address, you will be liberated after his examination. Otherwise, it will be necessary to satisfy ourselves as to your identity. Not a word more, sir," he continued, as I tried to speak on behalf of my story. "Inspector, remove the prisoner."

"They took me away, and the surgeon examined me. To cut things short, I was pronounced mad, and three days later the commissioners passed me for a pauper asylum. When I came to be examined, they said I showed no recollection of most subjects of ordinary education.

"I am a chemist," said I; "try me with some chemical questions. You will see that I can answer sanely enough."

"How do you mix a grey powder?" said the commissioner.

"Excuse me," I said, "I mean a chemical philosopher, not an apothecary."

"Oh, very well, then; what is carbonic acid?"

"I never heard of it," I answered in despair. "It must be something which has come into use since—since I left off learning chemistry." For I had discovered that my only chance now was to avoid all reference to my past life and the extraordinary calamity which had thus unexpectedly overtaken me. "Please try me with something else."

"Oh, certainly. What is the atomic weight of chlorine?"

"I could only answer that I did not know.

"This is a very clear case," said the commissioner. "Evidently he is a gentleman by birth and education, but he can give no very satisfactory account of his friends, and till they come forward to claim him we can only send him for a time to North Street."

"For heaven's sake, gentlemen," I cried, "before you consign me to an asylum, give me one more chance. I am perfectly sane; I remember all I ever knew; but you are asking me questions about subjects on which I never had any information. Ask me anything historical, and see whether I have forgotten or confused any of my facts."

"I will do the commissioner the justice to say that he seemed anxious not to decide upon the case without full consideration. 'Tell me what you can recollect,' he said, 'as to the reign of George IV.'"

"I know nothing at all about it," I answered, terror-stricken, "but oh, do pray ask me anything up to the time of George III."

"Then please say what you think of the French Revolution."

"I was thunderstruck. I could make no reply, and the com-

missioners shortly signed the papers to send me to North Street pauper asylum. They hurried me into the street, and I walked beside my captors towards the prison to which they had consigned me. Yet I did not give up all hope even so of ultimately regaining my freedom. I thought the rationality of my demeanour and the obvious soundness of all my reasoning powers would suffice in time to satisfy the medical attendant as to my perfect sanity. I felt sure that people could never long mistake a man so clear-headed and collected as myself for a madman.

‘On our way, however, we happened to pass a churchyard where some workmen were engaged in removing a number of old tombstones from the crowded area. Even in my existing agitated condition, I could not help catching the name and date on one mouldering slab which a labourer had just placed upon the edge of the pavement. It ran something like this: “Sacred to the memory of Amelia, second daughter of the late Sir Thomas Spragg, knight, and beloved wife of Henry McAlister, Esq., by whom this stone is erected. Died May 20, 1799, aged 44 years.” Though I had gathered already that my dear girl must probably have long been dead, yet the reality of the fact had not yet had time to fix itself upon my mind. You must remember, my dear sir, that I had but awaked a few days earlier from my long slumber, and that during those days I had been harassed and agitated by such a flood of incomprehensible complications, that I could not really grasp in all its fulness the complete isolation of my present position. When I saw the tombstone of one whom, as it seemed to me, I had loved passionately but a week or two before, I could not refrain from rushing to embrace it, and covering the insensible stone with my boiling tears. “Oh, my Amelia, my Amelia,” I cried, “I shall never again behold thee, then! I shall never again press thee to my heart, or hear thy dear lips pronounce my name!”

‘But the unfeeling wretches who had charge of me were far from being moved to sympathy by my bitter grief. “Died in 1799,” said one of them with a sneer. “Why, this madman’s blubbering over the grave of an old lady who has been buried for about a hundred years!” And the workmen joined in their laughter as my gaolers tore me away to the prison where I was to spend the remainder of my days.

‘When we arrived at the asylum, the surgeon in attendance was informed of this circumstance, and the opinion that I was hopelessly mad thus became ingrained in his whole conceptions of my case. All this took place in the spring of the present year. I remained five months or more in the asylum, but I never saw any chance of creating a more favourable impression on the minds

of the authorities. Mixing as I did only with other patients, I could gain no clear ideas of what had happened since I had taken my fatal sleep; and whenever I endeavoured to question the keepers, they amused themselves by giving me evidently false and inconsistent answers, in order to enjoy my chagrin and confusion. I could not even learn the actual date of the present year, for one keeper would laugh and say it was 2001, while another would confidentially advise me to date my petition to the Commissioners, "Jan. 1, A.D. one million." The surgeon, who never played me any such pranks, yet refused to aid me in any way, lest, as he said, he should strengthen me in my sad delusion. He was convinced that I must be an historical student, whose reason had broken down through too close study of the eighteenth century; and he felt certain that sooner or later my friends would come to claim me. He is a gentle and humane man, against whom I have no personal complaint to make; but his initial misconception prevented him and everybody else from ever paying the least attention to my story. I could not even induce them to make inquiries at my house at Hampstead, where the discovery of the subterranean laboratory would have partially proved the truth of my account.

'Many visitors came to the asylum from time to time, and they were always told that I possessed a minute and remarkable acquaintance with the history of the eighteenth century. They questioned me about facts which are as vivid in my memory as those of the present month, and were much surprised at the accuracy of my replies. But they only thought it strange that so clever a man should be so very mad, and that my information should be so full as to past events, while my notions about the modern world were so utterly chaotic. The surgeon, however, always believed that my reticence about all events posterior to 1781 was a part of my insanity. I had studied the early part of the eighteenth century so fully, he said, that I fancied I had lived in it; and I had persuaded myself that I knew nothing at all about the subsequent state of the world.'

The poor fellow stopped a while, and again drew his sleeve across his forehead. It was impossible to look at him and believe for a moment that he was a madman.

'And how did you make your escape from the asylum?' I asked.

'Now, this very evening,' he answered; 'I simply broke away from the door and ran down toward the Strand, till I came to a place that looked a little like St. Martin's Fields, with a great column and some fountains, and near there I met you. It seemed

to me that the best thing to do was to catch the York coach and get away from the town as soon as possible. You met me, and your look and name inspired me with confidence. I believe you must be a descendant of my dear brother.'

'I have not the slightest doubt,' I answered solemnly, 'that every word of your story is true, and that you are really my great-great-uncle. My own knowledge of our family history exactly tallies with what you tell me. I shall spare no endeavour to clear up this extraordinary matter, and to put you once more in your true position.'

'And you will protect me?' he cried fervently, clasping my hand in both his own with intense eagerness. 'You will not give me up once more to the asylum people?'

'I will do everything on earth that is possible for you,' I replied.

He lifted my hand to his lips and kissed it several times, while I felt hot tears falling upon it as he bent over me. It was a strange position, look at it how you will. Grant that I was but the dupe of a madman, yet even to believe for a moment that I, a man of well-nigh fifty, stood there in face of my own great-grandfather's brother, to all appearance some twenty years my junior, was in itself an extraordinary and marvellous thing. Both of us were too overcome to speak. It was a few minutes before we said anything, and then a loud knock at the door made my hunted stranger rise up hastily in terror from his chair.

'Gracious heavens!' he cried, 'they have tracked me hither. They are coming to fetch me. Oh, hide me, hide me, anywhere from these wretches!'

As he spoke, the door opened, and two keepers with a policeman entered my room.

'Ah, here he is!' said one of them, advancing towards the fugitive, who shrank away towards the window as he approached.

'Do not touch him,' I exclaimed, throwing myself in the way. 'Every word of what he says is true, and he is no more insane than I am.'

The keeper laughed a low laugh of vulgar incredulity. 'Why, there's a pair of you, I do believe,' he said. 'You're just as mad yourself as t'other one.' And he pushed me aside roughly to get at his charge.

But the poor fellow, seeing him come towards him, seemed suddenly to grow instinct with a terrible vigour, and hurled off the keeper with one hand, as a strong man might do with a little terrier. Then, before we could see what he was meditating, he jumped upon the ledge of the open window, shouted out loudly,

‘Farewell, farewell!’ and leapt with a spring on to the embankment beneath.

All four of us rushed hastily down the three flights of steps to the bottom, and came below upon a crushed and mangled mass on the spattered pavement. He was quite dead. Even the policeman was shocked and horrified at the dreadful way in which the body had been crushed and mutilated in its fall, and at the suddenness and unexpectedness of the tragedy. We took him up and laid him out in my room; and from that room he was interred after the inquest, with all the respect which I should have paid to an undoubted relative. On his grave in Kensal Green Cemetery I have placed a stone bearing the simple inscription, ‘Jonathan Spottiswood. Died 1881.’ The hint I had received from the keeper prevented me from saying anything as to my belief in his story, but I asked for leave to undertake the duty of his interment on the ground that he bore my own surname, and that no other person was forthcoming to assume the task. The parochial authorities were glad enough to rid the ratepayers of the expense.

At the inquest I gave my evidence simply and briefly, dwelling mainly upon the accidental nature of our meeting, and the facts as to his fatal leap. I said nothing about the known disappearance of Jonathan Spottiswood in 1781, nor the other points which gave credibility to his strange tale. But from this day forward I give myself up to proving the truth of his story, and realising the splendid chemical discovery which promises so much benefit to mankind. For the first purpose, I have offered a large reward for the discovery of a trap-door in a coal-cellar at Hampstead, leading into a subterranean passage and laboratory; since, unfortunately, my unhappy visitor did not happen to mention the position of his house. For the second purpose, I have begun a series of experiments upon the properties of the essential oil of alchemilla, and the possibility of successfully treating it with carbonic anhydride; since, unfortunately, he was equally vague as to the nature of his process and the proportions of either constituent. Many people will conclude at once, no doubt, that I myself have become infected with the monomania of my miserable namesake, but I am determined at any rate not to allow so extraordinary an anæsthetic to go unacknowledged, if there be even a remote chance of actually proving its useful nature. Meanwhile, I say nothing even to my dearest friends with regard to the researches upon which I am engaged.

J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON.

## Two Delicate Cases.

If you have never read my work—Dr. Dormer's masterpiece, as I am told it is termed by the profession—upon the Skin, in connection with the interesting subject of tattooing, you had better get it, because the book is becoming exceedingly rare. I may say without vanity that it is by far the best monograph on the subject that exists; for it is the only one. Others—hundreds of others—have written, of course, upon skin diseases. Indeed, the question I found myself putting to myself on commencing practice in London as an expert in that branch of the healing art, was, 'What have they *not* written about?' There are nowadays but two methods of getting one's name known and establishing a medical reputation in London: one is by taking a house in Mayfair with an immense doorplate, and setting up a brougham and pair in which you sit well forward and are driven rapidly as if you had not a moment to lose; the other is by the publication of some exhaustive treatise, with coloured plates. Most of these last, though often striking (indeed, once seen, you will never forget them), are to the unprofessional eye by no means attractive, and it was not my object to recommend myself to the profession only. Instead, therefore, of any glowing account of the nature of Carbuncles, or genial essay on Port-wine Marks, I devoted myself to the comparatively unknown but picturesque subject of Tattooing.

It was not, it must be owned, one of very general application, but it had some general interest, and if only that could be aroused and concentrated upon Nicholas Dormer, his future would be assured.

I had the honour of being the first man to introduce to the public (through the columns of the 'Medical Mercury') the case of Matthew Stevadore, the most highly coloured and artistically executed individual known to science. He had been made prisoner in Chinese Tartary and sentenced to be put to death, but his punishment had been commuted (or extended) to tattooing. Five others suffered with him, but he was the only survivor of the operation, which combined the horrors of sitting for one's portrait and vivisection. The victim was held fast by four strong men, while a fifth, the artist, worked away upon him with a split reed, like a steel pen, for hours. At the end of three months he was considered finished, and would doubtless have been 'hung upon the

line' if the Chinese Tartars had had a Royal Academy in which to exhibit him.

The pigments used are doubtful; it is certain they were not powdered charcoal, gunpowder, or cinnabar, the colours used by our native artists (chiefly marine) for the same purpose, inasmuch as 'none of the particles remained entangled in the meshes of the true skin (corium),' or 'became encapsuled' (see article in '*Medical Mercury*') 'in the nearest lymphatic glands.' One must conclude that the work was performed by the simple agency of the juice of plants. Yet the effect produced was perfect. 'So it ought to be,' poor Matthew used to say with a groan of reminiscence, when complimented upon his personal appearance. Indeed, I have no doubt that the operation hurt him very much. If he had known that he was going to be a contribution to science, or even to have formed the subject of an article in the '*Mercury*,' he might (perhaps) have borne up better. But as it was, those consolatory reflections were denied him. He had only the satisfaction of feeling that (if he survived) he would be the best illustrated man in Chinese Tartary.

He looked, when in nature's garb, as though the whole of his body was tightly enveloped in a robe of the richest webbing. From the crown of his head to the tips of his toes he was covered with dark blue figures of plants and animals, in the interspaces of which were written characters (testimonials, for all I know) in blue and red. The hands were tattooed on both surfaces, but only with inscriptions; probably a condensed biography of the artist himself, with a catalogue of his other works. The blue figures stopped short at the insteps, but the tattooing was continued on the feet in scarlet to the roots of the nails. Through the very hair of the scalp and beard could be seen 'designs' in blue. On the whole body there were no fewer than 388 figures: apes, cats, tigers, eagles, storks, swans, elephants, crocodiles, snakes, fish, lions, snails, and men and women; of inanimate objects such as fruits, flowers, leaves, and bows and arrows, there was also a lavish supply; and upon his forehead on each side were two panthers '*regardant*'—that is, looking down with admiration (as well they might) upon this interesting and unrivalled collection.

Such were the attractions of my honest friend Matthew Stevadore, who made a good deal of money by the exhibition of them in Vienna, where I went on purpose to see him. It may certainly be said of him, if of anybody, that 'we shall never look upon his like again.' It has been remarked that '*beauty is only skin-deep*,' but in his case it was at all events more lasting than usual. If it was not '*a joy for ever*,' he retained it as long as he lived.

Of course I incorporated my notes in the 'Mercury' upon this case—after what had been written *upon* him, Matthew didn't care twopence what was written *about* him—in my work upon Tattooing, which also contained a full-length portrait of him in colours. It had an immense success, but, strange to say, did not increase—that is, commence—my professional practice. I published another book of a more scientific kind with the same result; that is to say, it had none. It was tolerably successful as medical works go—it cost the author not more than fifty pounds or so; but, as was remarked by the senior surgeon of our hospital, who has the misfortune to be a wag, 'it didn't beat the tattoo;' while the general public of course never so much as heard of it.

One day, however, grim Fortune relaxed into a smile which I took for good nature, though, as it turned out, it was only cynicism. A carriage and pair drove up to my door, out of which stepped an eminent personage. There is a temptation to leave that description of my visitor as it stands; but I scorn to deceive the public, and therefore hasten to add that it was *not* a member of the Royal Family. He was not at that time even a peer of the realm; but nevertheless he was a man of great importance. I knew him by sight as one of the life-governors of our hospital; and I knew him by report as being one of the greatest financiers in the city. A tall soldier-like fellow, very upright, though he bore on his own shoulders many a gigantic speculation, and with an air of command that was quite Napoleonic, as befitted the master of millions. Being so very rich, there were naturally many stories afloat concerning him, and all to his disadvantage. The same thing happens in the case of all our great men, from statesmen to poets. His mother was in the workhouse; his brother in penal servitude; he had murdered his first wife, and was starving his second. He himself—as a slight drawback to the enjoyment of his ill-gotten gains—had a disease previously unknown to the human species.

If so, I only hoped he had come to consult me about it. A surgeon's duty is to heal, not to give ear to idle rumours. Still, I could not help regarding him as he took his seat in my study with a certain curiosity. His name was Mostyn, or rather his card asserted as much; his features were Caucasian, and suggested Moses. His speech was very calm and deliberate, either the result of indifference to any change of fortune that might possibly befall him, or a precautionary measure to restrain a natural tendency to talk through his nose.

'My visit here, Dr. Dormer, is a strictly confidential one. I trust to your honour as a member of a chivalrous profession—and



I will also make it worth your while—not to reveal the nature of this application to any human being, during my lifetime.’

I gave my promise, and kept it. Mr. Mostyn—Dives Mostyn, as the world once called him—has long since been gathered to his fathers, whoever they were. He died in Paddington Workhouse.

‘In my early days,’ he went on, ‘I bore a very different character from that which I have since acquired.’ Here he stopped: he was obviously in a difficulty. I hastened to help him out of it.

‘You mean, perhaps,’ said I, smiling (as though it were of no consequence), ‘that you bore an indifferent character?’

‘Just so,’ he answered; ‘thank you. Not that I ever did anything positively discreditable.’

I waved my hand to intimate that even if it had been so (which was incredible), it would make no matter to me. This kind of ‘treatment’ in such cases (to speak professionally), I have always found to afford immense relief.

‘In youth, however,’ proceeded my visitor, ‘I was what is called a ne’er-do-well. I could not settle to anything. Finance—of which, if I may say so, I have shown myself to be a master—was a calling not at that time open to me. I never had more than a few shillings to call my own, and any attempt to persuade other people to let me have the management of *their* shillings would have been hopeless. The man was ready,’ said Mr. Mostyn, drawing himself up, ‘but the hour had not yet struck. I quarrelled with my family and enlisted.’

Here he stopped again, and I nodded; not exactly approval, I hope, but acquiescence. The thing had happened so long ago that it was ridiculous to censure it; and besides, it was not my business.

‘The life of a soldier, Dr. Dormer, is attractive to adventurous spirits, and though I never was an adventurer—far from it—I had my dreams of military glory. They lasted about three weeks, when I deserted.’

‘That was serious,’ I observed.

‘It was very serious, sir, in its consequences. I was detected, brought back again, and—it was in the old times, you see—he hesitated, and once more I had the satisfaction of helping him out of his embarrassment—

‘I think I guess what happened,’ I said. ‘It may be indicated by a single letter, may it not?’

‘You are right. The letter *D*. It is branded between my shoulders. You are the great authority upon “brands” of this description. I am come here to have it removed.’

'Well, really, Mr. Mostyn,' said I, 'I'll do my best. But I never did have anything of this precise character to deal with—just let me look at it.'

He took off his coat and things and bared his shoulders.

'What's it like?' he inquired. 'I have cricked my neck a dozen times in trying to look at it. At the time it—it happened—though it was by no means a red-letter day for me in the usual sense—I had an impression—a very strong impression—that it was red.'

'It is white now,' I answered, 'or nearly so; only when you strike it—see—'

'I can't see,' returned the patient testily.

'Quite true: I beg your pardon. You must take my word for it that when you strike it, it becomes red again.'

'It's quite visible, I conclude, whatever colour it is? eh, doctor?'

'Well, yes, I am bound to say it is.'

'You could read it ten feet off, I dare say? Come, be frank with me.'

'I am not near-sighted, my dear sir,' I replied, 'and therefore could read it at twenty. It's a very large letter.'

'I don't doubt it,' he answered grimly. 'It seemed to me at one time that I was all D. I must look like one of those sandwich-men who go about with capitals between their shoulders.'

'Well, Mr. Mostyn, of course I should never have ventured to make use of such a parallel, but since you mention it, it *does* remind one of some sort of advertising medium. There are many things so advertised,' I added consolingly, 'of a most respectable character.'

'No doubt,' he answered drily. 'My D must look like something theological and denunciatory.'

'Or a certain famous sherry,' said I, falling into his humour.

'Ah, but that's *not* brandied,' he answered bitterly.

I confess I compassionated my visitor sincerely. To a man in his position, it must have been very disagreeable to have this tell-tale memento of the past about him. And, after all, I knew for certain nothing worse about him than that he had had a distaste for the army which, indeed, I shared with him. He had evidently a great deal of humour, which, in a private soldier, must be a very dangerous possession. 'There is no discharge in that war,' as the preacher says, unless you can purchase it; so that really he had had no alternative but to desert.

I think my visitor read something of my thoughts, for he observed: 'You see, this may be a very unfortunate thing for me,

Dr. Dormer. People may say things behind my back and welcome, but if they *saw* things?’

‘Well, you don’t bathe in public, I conclude,’ said I consolingly.

‘No, but there are always risks. I might be run over by a cab and taken to a hospital. The idea of the possibility of disclosure makes me miserable. The higher I get in the financial world, the more dangerous my position appears to me. I have been twice “decorated” by foreign Governments; just imagine if it should come to be known that I had been decorated by my own, though (as we say in the House of Commons) “in another place.”’

I had forgotten that Mr. Mostyn was in the House. Indeed, that circumstance was merely a sort of pendant or corollary to his eminent position. He was essentially a man of mark, though until that morning, of course, I had never known how very literally he was so.

‘The question is, doctor,’ he continued gravely, ‘can you take it out?’

The phrase he used was a ridiculous one; a mark of that sort was not like the initials on a stolen pocket-handkerchief, to be picked out and smoothed away, and I frankly told him so.

‘The trace of the branding-iron is then indelible, I conclude?’

He was very cool, but I noticed his voice trembled in alluding to the instrument of his disgrace.

‘I am afraid so. Science—or at least *my* science—knows no means of eradicating it. There is, indeed, one method by means of which your secret may be preserved.’

‘Name it, and then name whatever fee you please,’ he exclaimed excitedly.

‘Well, you could be branded again in the same place with something different—some mark of good conduct, for example.’

He shook his head and put on his hat and other garments.

‘Thank you for your obliging offer,’ he said, ‘but I have had enough of that.’

It was obvious that he had quite made up his mind upon the point, so I did not press it, and we parted excellent friends.

The great financier’s visit, even had I done him any good, could, from the nature of the case, have been of no advantage to me in the way of advertisement; and as matters stood, except for his fee, I was not a halfpenny the better of it.

For six months afterwards I had no patient of any importance,

and almost began to think that my studies in tattooing were to have no practical result whatever. And yet the old house-surgeon at St. Kitts Hospital, who was reckoned a sagacious man, had given me this advice: 'My dear Dormer, be a specialist; do not attenuate your intelligence by vague and general studies; apply yourself to one thing only—"the little toe and its ailments," for example—and stick to it.'

One day a young lady called to consult me. She came in a hack cab, but I saw in a moment that she was used to a carriage and pair.

'I cannot give you my name,' she said, 'and I hope you will do me the favour not to seek for it.'

I bowed and assured her that I had no vulgar curiosity of that kind, though, on the other hand, it might be necessary, for professional reasons, to be made acquainted with her circumstances.

'My case,' she said, smiling, 'is scarcely one to require such a revelation. However, my position in life is good. I am engaged to be married to a gentleman of title. It is on account of that circumstance that I am paying you this visit.'

She looked so beautiful and blushed so charmingly, that if I had not been a professional man I should have envied that gentleman very much. Indeed, I could not help building a little romance about her in my own mind: perhaps she didn't like the man, who, being of title, was permitted by her family to persecute her with his attentions; and it might be that she was come to me to be tattooed in some temporary manner in order to choke him off. Her next words, however, showed that this supposition was quite unfounded.

'I love the gentleman, you must understand, doctor, very truly, and all my hopes are centred in him; but,'—here she began to stammer in the most graceful manner, like some lovely foreigner speaking broken English—'but, a long time ago' (my visitor was not more than eighteen at most), 'many years, in fact, I formed a girlish affection for my cousin Tom.'

'That very often happens,' I said encouragingly, for she had come to a dead stop. 'First love is like the measles (except that you catch it again), and leaves no trace behind it.'

'I beg your pardon,' she replied; 'in my case, it left a very considerable one.'

'Perhaps you had an exceptionally tender heart,' I said, turning my hands over in professional sympathy; 'such scars, however, are not ineradicable.'

'Quite true,' she said; 'and even if they are, they are not seen, which is, after all, the main point.'

Then I knew of course that she was a young lady of fashion, and that sentiment would be thrown away upon her.

'The fact is,' she continued with some abruptness, 'I may confess at once that I made a great fool of myself with Cousin Tom, and in a moment of mutual devotion we tattooed our names upon one another's arms. In his case it mattered nothing, but as for me, I was very soon convinced of the folly of such a proceeding.'

'You quarrelled with your cousin, perhaps?' I suggested lightly.

'Of course I quarrelled with him; but whether that happened or not, the inconvenience of such a state of things would have been just the same. The idea of putting on ball costume was out of the question with a big "Tom" on my arm, such as schoolboys cut on the back of a tree. I had to affect a delicacy of constitution which compelled me always to wear high dresses. Think of that, sir.'

'A most deplorable state of things,' I murmured.

'Well, I got used to *that*, and might in time have come to regard the matter with calmness; but, notwithstanding this comparative absence of personal attractions, I have had the good fortune to secure the affections of a very estimable young nobleman, and hence the affair becomes much more serious. Some day or another, he is almost certain to find out that hateful "Tom" upon my arm.'

'There is no doubt a possibility of it,' I assented gravely.

'Well, that would be a dreadful blow to him, I'm sure; he is very sensitive and slightly jealous; and I have come to you to have that dreadful word erased.'

With that she turned up her sleeve, and on her white shoulder it was true enough the word 'Tom' was very legibly engraved, though fortunately not quite so much at large as she had led me to expect.

'It does not look to me to have been done in gunpowder as usual,' observed I after a careful scrutiny.

'It wasn't,' she answered peevishly; 'it was done in slate-pencil, which we scraped together (idiots that we were) on the same plate.'

'It's very well done,' I answered; 'that is, from a tattooing point of view. May I ask if the christian name of your cousin Tom has any resemblance to that of your intended husband?'

'No, not the least. Why do you ask?'



*'It was done in slate-pencil.'*



‘Well, if it had been anything similar—such as John, you see—we might have converted Tom into John, and nobody would have been any the wiser; indeed, the young man would have taken it as a very pretty and original compliment.’

‘That would have been a capital plan,’ assented the young lady admiringly; ‘unfortunately, however, his name is Alexis.’

As substitution was impossible, I was compelled to try erasure, and even that was a very difficult job. I had no idea that powdered slate-pencil could be so permanent. In the end, by persevering with infusions of milk, I contrived to tone down the objectionable ‘Tom’ to a vague inscription such as to a man of research would have suggested Nineveh or the Moabite stone; in the case of Lord Alexis, however, I suggested that it might be attributed to the result of an unusually successful vaccination, and I have good reason to believe that that was the view he took of it.

As for the young lady, she showed her gratitude in a very practical way, and I owe a considerable portion of my present extensive practice to her good offices. In my whole experience, however, I have never had a more delicate case than hers.

JAMES PAYN.



## Brought Back to the World.

My name is David Habbajam—an ugly name doubtless, but then I am an ugly man to match. It's a name I am rather proud of, though, because there are so very few of our family up and down the country—the north country, as a rule. I was an unsettled body when young, and wanted to make my fortune in a hurry; I came to London early in life, took a situation in a steam-boat company at twenty-two shillings a week, rose to thirty shillings by degrees, married and settled on that last amount, lost my wife when our baby was only two weeks old and wanted a mother badly, lost my situation in the winter months, and had to go on the parish—baby and all; came out in the spring and went on active steam-boat service again, lived or tried to live for twelve or fourteen years after that, brought up little Em in the way she should go—and she went it, heaven be praised, as straight as any die—broke my leg in two places, and had it set any how by a Guy's youth who was at the hospital for practice and trying to get handy by degrees, had one leg shorter than another, and limped worse than a cat, became a kind of half-superannuated fellow in the business, and, though not considered, as they told me kindly once, 'of much account,' was reduced to fifteen shillings a week, and put on to night duty, which means taking care of the pier after the work is over, and seeing that nobody runs away with it. A quiet occupation, and the only change about it is in the weather, as a rule, and that is as full of variety as ever it can stick.

Still, I got used to it. I was not a delicate man, I was not an old man. Barring my infirmity, I was well and strong at four-and-fifty years of age, though people said I looked four-and-sixty at the least, and grew uglier with every blessed day.

I was a melancholy man; a few considered me a cross, ill-grained kind of fellow, but that was a libel at the outset. I can't say that I was of a happy disposition: I had nothing to make me particularly happy, goodness knows. Stumping about a wet windy shanty on the river from nightfall to six in the morning, with a red lamp to mind, and a landing-stage, a boat, two mops, a pail, and a coil of rope for company, with the dark river rushing by you, and the big black arch of the bridge spread over head like a high-pitched cell—and where's the fun, I wonder? I couldn't see it, and so I grew a little dull and doleful. 'Dull David,' I was called. I was set apart from life, you see, almost clean done for,

I accepted the position with philosophy—I didn't fret—I didn't know that I cared much, I tried hard not to think about it. It was no use thinking. It was this or the Union, and I preferred *this*. If I went home after duty and slept the greater part of the day, I wanted rest and warmth, and there was nothing to keep awake for, that I was certain. Em had gone away; she had married the head gamekeeper at Estfield three years ago, and was happier with her husband and two little children than ever I could have made her in Cherry Gardens Court, Snowfields. And it was she and her letters to me that kept me from being the cross, ill-grained fellow that the company's men tried to make me out. She was my guardian angel, God bless her. And like her mother too, growing more like her every day, and so a better woman never lived.

Em kept life pretty bearable to me, far off as she was, and it was of her I could think in my night duty on the pier, making time pass comfortably, and the grey sky come up suddenly before I was aware of it. A fortnight in the year the company let me, at my own expense, go down into the country for my holidays, and there I was happy, if you like, and no mistake about it. It was this I lived for, and I was no sooner back on duty again, than I was counting the weeks before I should be down at Em's next year. And Em's husband, though a little rough, was a hearty fellow, and not sorry to see me. I liked Em's husband—a sensible, hard-headed man: I like him still, a little.

It was winter time, and the most trying of times, when this story begins, when I might say, for the matter of that, life began again for me and I had lots to think about, and found myself not so shut away from everybody and everything as I had fancied that I was.

It was not far off Christmas time, getting on fast into December. The weather had been 'muggy' for the time of year, damp and muggy, with uncomfortable mists stealing up the river and stopping on the river day as well as night, and putting an end to business right off. The mist was on the river, thick as soup, on the night I am about to speak of. I might have been up in a balloon or down a coal mine, for the difference it was to this slaty atmosphere around me. Looking down, I could hear the water murmuring as it sped along, but I could not see it that night, and the light behind the red glass, which I had trimmed twice, looked weak and wretched, and sputtered fretfully in the damp air which oozed in somehow to it. Odd it was that I was actually nervous that night, I who was used to everything, and had no nerves worth mentioning. When I had locked the two doors of the

pier, one on each side of the arch of the great bridge, and at the bottom of the steep stone steps, I felt, I remember, as if I had locked myself in a new strange place, in which I had never been before. I could hardly see about the pier; I shambled and stumbled awkwardly, and was more lame than usual; there were odd voices on the river, and shouts occasionally from men on fog-bound barges, and vessels moored mid-stream, and the grey pall grew thicker and thicker, and settled down completely on me, as the night stole by. I began to think it was not difficult to walk slap off the pier into the river in this darkness, and be swirled away for ever, with Em and Em's husband, and her two little kids, all girls, never a bit the wiser, or thinking and grieving perhaps that I had done it on purpose to get away for good from such uncomfortable work. I was not certain that night of any step I took, the landing-stage was in my way, and the two mops were all over the place, and a step or two from the red light was to lose sight of it completely, and to wonder presently where on earth it was, and if I should be lucky enough to come across it soon.

I sat down and waited for the fog to clear, and listened to the noises on the river. I had to doze away the time till morning. I was helpless, and could see nothing and do nothing. If my vigil were broken that night by anything strange and unforeseen, I felt that I should be as helpless as a baby, and when the clocks were booming one in the morning from a score of steeples on both sides of the river, the strange and unforeseen occurred. Suddenly—I remember it all as if it were only yesterday—somebody tried the doors which I had locked, and which shut the pier off from the damp stone steps outside. I was sitting on the long wooden seat under the recess, where passengers waited out of the rain very frequently, when the doors were shaken, pressed against and rattled by somebody very persistent in vain efforts to get upon the pier, some one ignorant of pier management, and who had doubtless thought that at all hours of the night it was free and open to the public.

I was a little startled, though I had known a policeman now and then come down for a bit of a talk with me, or to make sure that I was as much on duty as he was, but I should have heard the clomp of his boots descending the steps, and been ready to give good night or morning to him. But this was a person who had sneaked down in the fog shadows, and made a dash for the pier, and been balked by the closed doors.

‘Who’s there?’ I called out; ‘does anybody want me?’

Of course I got no answer—I did not expect an answer—probably I had surprised the party on the other side of the door

as much as I had been surprised myself. There was a long pause, a deep, dead silence, and I could fancy, being of a fanciful turn that night, that some poor, world-driven soul, to whom the thoughts of the river were thoughts of peace and rest, was cowering down in fear of detection on the dark, wet steps of the bridge. I called again, and got no answer; I unlocked the door, and saw nothing but fog, thick and dense and grey, before me; I called a third time, 'Who is it? What's the matter?' Then I shut the door and locked myself in again, and sat down to ponder on the reason for it all, and to think it was very likely that my first idea was pretty near the mark. Ay—and so it was. For, half an hour afterwards, there was an awful shriek, a regular blood-curdler coming upon one suddenly and turning me all cold; and then followed the splash, crash into the water, the old bad last chapter of a lost life and a lost soul. I had heard it more than once before in my long service at the river's edge. I had read of it twenty times, but I had never felt like this, or so excited under the common circumstances of man or woman's blank despair, and desperate rush away from it.

I forgot my nervousness, I was singularly on the alert, and with all my wits about me. On the pier there was always a boat in readiness to be lowered by a crane into the water, and after one shout myself for help, I lowered the boat, and flopped in as if I had been a young, strong man of one-and-twenty. I knew the state of the tide, and which way it was moving, and had it been a clear, bright night, with only a little star-shine to help me, I should have been almost able to guess the exact spot where the white face would come up first and stare at the sky. I could guess at it now, for the matter of that, if the party had jumped well into the water; a fair headlong plunge and he or she would meet the current coming on fast beneath the bridge, be swirled towards the pier, or else go spinning round and round a bit more to the other side of the arch. I rowed out into the fog and listened; I called out again, I heard the water lapping strangely by me, and I leaned forwards and put out my arms with a sudden eagerness, which was just like as if I had been told to do it, and there came against them, into them, the wet, silent form of man or woman, whose garments I did not leave go of again. I held on like grim death, and screamed for help. I tried to raise the body into the boat, but it was beyond my strength; I nearly ended my own span of life that night in my efforts; I lifted the head above water as well as I could, and drifted up the river with my burden; the boat bumped against the side of a barge, and I thought that all was really over then; I held on to the dress, a woman's dress I knew

at last, and then suddenly assistance came, and there was much shouting and commotion, and by-and-by I seemed to wake out of a dream to find myself with some ten or twenty people round me, all standing on the steps of the bridge, one with a lantern held very closely to the features of a woman drenched to death. But there was life in her, and we found it too, and presently she was looking wonderingly at the lantern, and at the shadows of the people round about her.

'Better take her to the hospital, now,' was suggested, and away the poor wild creature was carried, and I thought to myself, 'There's the end of the story again, I hope, and no further bother about it.' I was just getting old enough to object to bother, and I hoped that the woman would be brought to a fair state of recovery and then let go her way repentant—I was thankful I had not seen a policeman in the crowd to book the case, and it had all been done neatly and quickly by the riverside folk astir that foggy night.

But to get on with this part of the story, I may say at once that I was out of my reckoning and that the police knew of the matter, for the next morning at eleven of the clock there was I deprived of my usual rest to dance attendance before a magistrate as a witness in the case of what the papers call 'attempted suicide,' and to tell all I knew about it. And there was the woman I had saved too, peering at me from the dock as curiously as I glanced askew at her when called upon to give my evidence. The woman I had brought back to this odd world of ours, and who without me would have been a poor, dead, drowned thing by this time, with nothing more to trouble her, looked at me too, almost imploringly, I fancied. She seemed as if she was somebody who belonged to me now that I had hooked her out of the Thames, and found her for myself. 'Findings are keepings,' people say, and perhaps this poor bit of mortal wreckage had fallen to my share, though what to do with it I should never know. At all events, it was strange that I should feel a sense of proprietorship in her already—a tremendous desire to be of service to her—a feeling that her life was part of my own and belonging to me who, for better or worse, had snatched it from death, and set it going again. You see I felt poetical over it, and that was a bad sign for a fellow like me, and most uncommon strange. But there are heaps of stranger things to come, or this would never have been written. I'm not so fond of writing, mind you, it's a sight too much trouble for me, though I'm a bit handy with my pen, Em says, when I'm put to it.

Rachel Seeley—that was the name of the young woman in

charge, and who was accommodated with a chair, owing to her still being weak and ill—got the benefit of the doubt, and was acquitted with a mild caution from the magistrate not to be so foolish ever any more. I got her off, no doubt, for she said nothing for herself much.

‘I don’t remember anything,’ was her defence—if this was meant for a defence, or an excuse—‘I found myself in the water, where he saved me. That’s all I seem to know.’

She pointed to me, David Habbajam, when she talked of my share in the business, and I felt quite a hero when the magistrate complimented me upon my courage and presence of mind—I never had either of those accomplishments in all my life!—and thought I was deserving of some recompense, considering my age, which he need not have made such a fuss over, and gave me out of the poor-box ten shillings, which in my independent spirit I was half inclined to shy at him.

But nevertheless, it was I who got Rachel Seeley off, and who tried to get her off with all my might, thinking she had suffered enough, and been driven hard enough to get into the Thames at all—thinking, too, that she did not remember anything, or know what she was doing on that December night. She was from the country, and that told in her favour; she might have fancied that steamboats went on all night, for that matter, and she lodged Nine Elms way, and perhaps wanted to get home by water; and she had knocked and rattled at the closed door with an evident wish to make herself heard, and then when she had turned and gone down the steps—thinking herself in the right way at last—she did not forget to scream for help, I said, when she found herself in the water by mistake.

And so Rachel Seeley got off, and I was glad of it. I don’t know whether she was; her good-looking, hard face did not brighten up much at the prospect of immediate release; she bowed her head as if by way of thanks, or ‘good morning to you,’ to the magistrate, then gravely and sadly came to me afterwards, and held out her hand. We were fifty yards beyond the station-house at that time.

‘You might have lost your own life in trying to save mine. You will let me say I should have been sorry for that—if I had had time to be sorry about anything—Mr. Habbajam,’ she added.

‘Ah! well, I hope you won’t come my way at that time of night again,’ I said.

‘I hope not,’ was her thoughtful answer; ‘I think not.’

‘For,’ I added, when we were well out of earshot of the last

policeman, 'it was no accident that took you down there—and no ignorant mistake.'

'I didn't say it was,' was the calm reply.

'You meant to do it.'

'Yes—I meant to do it,' she confessed, looking at me steadily with two dark bright eyes, which did not flinch from mine.

'I'm grieved to hear it, young woman,' I remarked. 'You should have known better and thought better than that.'

'It's easy to preach, ain't it?' she answered moodily. 'Oh, the heaps of good advice I have had in my time! the lots of friendly warnings, and the waste of breath it was! And always is,' she added philosophically, 'to most of us.'

'To most self-willed women. Ay, that's true.'

'Men and women, for the matter of that. Good morning.'

'Might I ask, Rachel Seeley, where you are going now?'

She looked at me again—I could almost fancy there was gipsy blood in her—her face was so dark-skinned, unless it was by the shock of last night's desperation which had given an extra depth of colour to it.

'I don't know,' she answered frankly.

'You said in court you were living at Nine Elms.'

'I said so—yes.'

'The police are sure to have made inquiries, and found out that it was all true, before you went up this morning.'

'Very likely. They didn't know there that I went away for good last night.'

'Then you are not going back to Nine Elms?'

'No,' she answered.

'And don't know where you are going?'

'Not in the least.'

'Poor woman!' I murmured, more to myself than to her, but she responded quickly.

'Oh! don't pity me. I don't want pity, and I don't deserve it, and it's no business of yours!'

'I beg your pardon, but it is business of mine,' I said. 'You are business of mine; I've brought you back to the world, and I've a right to know what you're going to do in it now you are back.'

'Why didn't you let me be!' she muttered; 'and what was the good of all the trouble you took?'

'That remains to be seen,' I said; 'that's in other hands, lass.'

'Oh! you are a religious man,' she remarked, looking afraid of me for the first time; 'I thought as much.'

'No, I am not,' I replied; 'don't make any mistake about that.'

I was not a religious man, but I need not have been so indignant at the charge. I only wanted to know more concerning Rachel Seeley, and I was afraid of frightening her away right off, she seemed so scared at my 'serious' talk! So I tried to make out to her that there wasn't a scrap of religion in me; and I wasn't wide of the mark, surely. What time had I had, before I broke my leg in two places, to be religious? I wondered. And didn't I sleep all day like a dormouse, Sunday and all, and with never a chance of going into a church, or just half a chance on Sunday evenings in the summer time, when the days were longer and night duty shorter. And then I didn't go!

'I suppose,' I ventured to remark, 'you are able to get work, and can work?'

'I'm not fond of work,' she confessed; 'and if I were, who's to give it to me?'

'It's worth trying after.'

'I have tried.'

'Well, you must try again.'

'I don't know anybody in London who would trust me.'

'We'll see about that.'

'Well' she repeated, with a little natural surprise.

'Yes. I shall trust you, for one,' I said; 'and as you don't know what is to be done—and as I have a sort of share in you for fishing you out of the water on my own account—I mean to trust you with one week's lodging, which my landlady, who has a furnished top room in Cherry Gardens Court, will let you have on my recommendation, I've not the slightest doubt. The week will give you time to look round, and perhaps to find work enough to pay me back the rent. It's not much of a chance—but there it is. And it's only for one week, understand. No more—I can't afford any more.'

This was my artfulness, as if I wasn't going on, if necessary, week after week, month after month—which I couldn't have done comfortably, though I had intended to try it, if things had not turned out differently, and almost as soon as she had said to me, 'Thank you, David Habbajam, I'll take my chance, then, for a week.'

'That's bravely said, Rachel.'

'And I may say presently, God bless you for it,' she added. 'I can't yet. For I don't see.'

'Don't see what?'

'What is to come of it all,' she answered.

'Well, no more do I.'

And there was nothing more, surely, and both she and I thought of that a short while afterwards. We couldn't help think-



ing of it, either of us ; it was not likely to get out of our heads again.

Rachel Seeley was received gladly as a lodger by Mrs. Twitters, who had been doing rather badly down Cherry Gardens Court, with her top back room empty since last June. Mrs. Twitters was kind and motherly, and took an interest in Rachel, because she was like her own daughter Ellen, she said, who had gone away to Australia and got married—not that she was like her at all ; but that's neither here nor there. She found that Rachel Seeley could work a sewing machine with the best of them, and Mrs. Twitters lived by sewing for a wholesale house in High Street, Borough, and now and then wanted an extra hand to help her. So here occasionally came work for Rachel Seeley, a little spell of work that kept her moving, and helped to pay the rent, but did not seem to raise her spirits much.

Rachel was a young woman with a long look ahead ; and far away out of Cherry Gardens Court it was, and with never a smile upon it to make it comfortable. It was not a frown, only a steady grave stare which was scarcely pleasant to watch, and made one wonder what there was beyond. I thought she was sorry for her wild dash at the river, but did not care to speak of it to anybody, or else that she was brooding very deeply on the reason for it all, the reason that might exist still far away in the distance at which she was looking steadily.

If she ever smiled, or tried to smile, it was when I met her on the stairs or in the street, and there was a cheery ring in her voice when she bade me good morning or good evening, just as if she took it for granted that I was a friend, and had a claim upon the life I had set working again in Cherry Gardens Court.

I did not tell Mrs. Twitters her history, or the fragment of it that I knew : 'a friend from the country,' with a week's rent paid in advance, had been quite sufficient for my landlady, and Rachel Seeley was not one to extract much information from.

'She's nice and quiet,' Mrs. Twitters said to me, 'and don't give a mite of trouble ;' but Mrs. Twitters was as deceitful as the sex, speaking misanthropically, for once, when she thought I was not at home, I heard her say to a neighbour in the court—Mrs. Risbeck, who dealt in ladies' and gentlemen's left-off wearing apparel, and was always to be met in town with a dropsical black bag—'that Mrs. Seeley gave her the creeps, "sitting like a himage," with never a word coming out of her mouth, if she could help it.'

All in the first week, this was ; the second, I was taken bad with rheumatic fever, and did not have much time for observation. It came late to me, but it was surely caught by my river exploit, the

doctor said ; and then I grew worse and worse, and did not mind what anybody told me, although the general chorus was that I was at death's door, and it was opening for me nice and wide. I thought it might as well open as not, if I could only see Em and Em's children first, and ask Em's husband to be kind to them always if he would, and for the old man's sake as well as theirs.

I lost count of a week or two presently, for when I came to myself I was told that Em had been up to see me, and stayed as long as leave of absence had been granted by her husband, who was anxious to get her back again as soon as she had left him, and that I did not know her, but lay and made faces at her finely. Em was only reconciled to leaving me again by the fact that I was in careful hands, and by the promise that if any change for the worse should show itself, she was to be telegraphed to on the instant, and this Rachel Seeley promised her.

There was no occasion to telegraph. I got better slowly, and thanks to Rachel, whose were the 'careful hands' alluded to by Em. Never was there such a nurse as she ; so kind, and gentle, and considerate ; so thoughtless of herself and her own health in her incessant application to me ; so full of grief when I was at my worst, they said ; so full of joy when I was on the mend, and showing always some rare and strange bright looks to those who were interested in my coming round.

It was astonishing how kind everybody had been, too, during my illness. I had had no idea there was such a lot of good and thoughtful people down Cherry Gardens Court, and even in the world outside of it. Putting aside Em and Em's husband, who of course wrote up that I was to want for nothing, there was Mrs. Twitters to make me broths, and Mrs. Risbeck to bring me extra blankets for my bed, and all the boys who lived in the court, and were in the habit of shouting after me 'Old Daddy Habbajam,' to take their marbles and buttons and hop-sotch to the end of the thoroughfare, so that their noise should not rob me of the rest I needed ; and there was Rachel Seeley, of course, and one whom I had only known a week before my illness came upon me. She, I have said, was invaluable to me, and everything that could be wished ; and everybody said so too, and let me know it.

'They tell me I should have died without you, Rachel,' I remarked when I was allowed to sit up and look about me ; 'and I believe I should.'

'Nonsense !' she replied curtly enough ; 'I was sure you would live through it, from the first ; I told them so.'

'Ah, you have pulled me through.'

'Well, if I have, I am glad,' she answered.

‘It’s tit for tat, like, isn’t it?’ I said.

She had been almost cheerful till I said that, and then she looked dull and grave, and black at once. To remind her of that December night of desperation was always to cast her into gloom, although she did not seek to evade the subject when it was before her. She only looked as if the memory gave her pain, but a pain which she was called upon to bear.

‘No, it is not tit for tat; I can never repay you. Even your illness has been all my fault.’

‘I don’t see that.’

‘Yes, you do, only you will not own it; and you have been,’ she added, ‘so very kind, the only friend I have ever had, that if you had died, I don’t know what would have become of me.’

‘That’s a good one, that is,’ I replied.

I did not know what was a good one, but I could not think of any response at the moment, and I dwelt upon her words all the rest of the day, and let them harass me at night. It was so strange to be thought anything of now, save by Em down in Devonshire; it had seemed of so little account, of no account, whether I was out of the world or in it; it was so unlikely that anyone would miss me save Bill Hump when he came to take his morning’s spell at pier work, and found I was off night duty, and never coming back again—that I could not get her words out of my head. There was so much gratitude in them, and there was so much feeling for me, that I felt glad I had not been carted away by the parish, but was creeping round to my old self. And when I was quite round, it was satisfactory to see that she was very pleased, and that I heard her once say, ‘Thank God for it,’ as if I was something she’d been praying for. Fancy anyone praying for old Habbajam! I could have died of laughing at the idea, if it wasn’t for some baby tears which seemed to come up in my eyes instead.

I went back to work, finding night duty the hardest job at first for anyone in the fever line of business, but getting used to it by degrees again, and thankful that the company had kept the place open for me, considering the reason which had first put me on the shelf.

I don’t know that I was ever much happier when I had settled down really to business, or ever felt that I had more of a home about me. Certainly not since my poor wife’s death—nothing like it. Rachel Seeley made things so comfortable, seemed to anticipate my little wants so quickly, was always up and doing when I came back from duty, and had tea or coffee waiting for me, just as Em’s mother would have done had she lived to this day. Rachel was part of home—all the home I had. She had made life worth

caring about again ; I began to think that Cherry Gardens Court would be a blessed dull place without her, for she cheered me up without being cheerful herself, save by a flash like, which was gone as soon as it had come. I never knew a woman more completely friendless than herself ; nobody seemed to ask for her, to write to her ; she wrote to nobody, and made no fresh friends. Out of doors, and away from the dark little room in the close court in Snow-fields, she would not stir if she could help it, and she was as timid after dark, they said—I never noticed it myself—as any child.

Well, I guess the reader knows what was in the wind about this time : that I was falling in love with a woman young enough to be my daughter, that I was getting on to behave like an old fool, which is one of the worst of fools, for I have tried it myself, and the proverb's as accurate as any that I know of.

And I 'out with it' too, after one or two nights' calm reflection on the pier, with the mop and pail for company, and the lights on the river winking at me, as much as to say, ' Well, you are a rum un, Habbajam '—at least, I could fancy they were saying it.

I told Rachel Seeley that I had got very fond of her, and that I didn't see any particular reason against our making a match of it, unless it was that she hated old men very much indeed, and me as much as most of them. I said we both seemed out of the world rather more than anybody else, and that we were both very friendless ; that she had nobody to think of her, and I had only Em, who was a good two hundred miles off, and of course thought of nothing but her children and her husband, except at Christmas, when she sent me two rabbits, a bottle of ketchup of her own making, and some slices of cold plum pudding which never agreed with me. I said and thought that Rachel and I would be happier together, that we understood each other, and that together our little earnings would make us comfortabler, with one fire to keep up and one rent to pay ; and that if all this had never crossed her mind before, perhaps she would let it from that time, and until she got used to it a bit.

Rachel listened patiently ; I can see her now with her hands clasped together, and her gaze directed to them steadily and even sternly. She did not blush in the least, she was not embarrassed ; she was even cold and steely over the proposal, as one might be who had been offered a situation that was neither worth having nor refusing.

' You think you would be really happy, Mr. Habbajam, with me ? ' she asked slowly at last.

' I am sure I should.'

' That I could make this more like home to you ? '

‘Decidedly you could.’

‘I shouldn’t mind for myself—for I don’t care about myself in any way—and if you think it would be better, I don’t object at all,’ she said, with too much indifference to make me explode into raptures at her consent to my proposal.

‘Exactly. Thank you, Rachel—thank you,’ I stammered forth.

‘My life seems to belong to you, you have said very often,’ she continued sadly, ‘and you may share it with your own, if you care to do so. Nobody has so great a right. And I will try to keep you from ever saying “I was sorry that I asked her.” But——’

Then she stopped, and I thought her face looked whiter and harder than I had ever seen it till that morning.

‘But—what?’ I echoed.

‘But you must not worry me with any questions of my past—my life before I knew you,’ she went on; ‘you must be satisfied that it is past, and that I will not think of it, if it is possible. You will rest content with the fact that I love no one in it—that I hate everybody in it—and that I was very bad.’

‘No—no—I’m sure you were not, Rachel.’

‘It is only a bad one, David, that comes to the river as I did last December. And so you give a bad one your name,’ she went on, ‘pray understand that—a bad and desperate young woman whom God is not likely to forgive.’

‘Come, come, not so hard as all that. There is forgiveness for everybody who repents, you know.’

‘I have been told so,’ she answered moodily.

‘And you *have* repented?’

‘Oh! my God—yes,’ she cried with excitement at last, ‘if I could only atone—only live back a few years—only forget!’

I sat staring at her now; this was an exhibition of passion very new to me, and yet I must have known that she could be very rash and desperate—no one more so. There must have been something in my looks to calm her, for she became her grave self very quickly after she had found that they were bent upon her sorrowfully and wonderingly enough.

‘But I will make you a good wife,’ she repeated, ‘although I don’t want you to have me, unless it is your own free wish—although I would rather live on alone, just as we are, if you will let me.’

‘I have made up my mind, Rachel.’

‘Very well, then.’

So it was arranged that we were to be married, and that for ever before her life—the life that I had not shared—was to hang

a curtain which no hand of mine should seek to draw aside. The present I was to be content with always. I was sure it would content me, for I was not a curious man, and I was fond of Rachel Seeley.

We talked about our wedding day presently, and it seemed odd that we should fix on the exact day when I had saved her life. I had suggested it at first, and she had shivered with something like affright at it, at first, also. Then she thought again, and said—

‘Why not? It’s a day memorable for its horror, and I may date from it presently the life of an honest woman—which you make me, David.’

She put her hands in mine with that look of gratitude which she seemed to have for me very often, and which had drawn my old heart towards her, and the days seemed long in coming to December. As the time approached more closely, Rachel’s face, I noticed, gathered more of gloom in it, and this I did not like and was aggrieved to see. She was almost like a woman afraid at the last, and she would say at times, ‘You are sure—you are *quite* sure, that this is as you wish?’ and look as if my change of mind would have been almost a reprieve. Once I mentioned this, and she answered very quickly—

‘It is for your sake, not for my own, David. I should not like to bring unhappiness to you.’

‘But for yourself?’

‘I don’t belong to myself, you know,’ was her reply, ‘and I dread your saying some day, “I wish I had never married her!”’

‘Is that likely?’

‘I hope not. And if the day comes when I shall see upon your kind old face the thought that I am troubling you—why, the trouble shall not last four-and-twenty hours.’

‘I don’t quite understand you, Rachel.’

She did not answer me, and, being almost afraid of her answer, I did not press her for it. I thought that I should have no trouble with her—that she would make a good wife to a man whom it did not take much to render satisfied. I fancied we should jog on together to the end of my days, an odd couple enough, but in our quiet way quite satisfied with one another. And that is a remarkable way too, taking couples as they run, poor things. We might be the one pair in a thousand, after all, who trotted well in harness together—ah! who knows? It isn’t the swellest lot that makes it the easiest running also, I know. It was settled that Em and Em’s husband were not to be told anything of the matter till after the wedding; it was my wish, and Rachel had no objections

to urge. I had myself to please, no one else—and I did not want to upset Em's mind about it, or to get a heap of sound and sensible advice from Em's husband which would only aggravate me. I had but myself to please, and it pleased me to get married again. That was the simple position of affairs, with which only silly people would try to interfere. And they had not time to be ridiculous down in Cherry Gardens Court, and only said amongst themselves, 'So old Habbajam is going to marry again! Well, I wish him luck;' and I thought myself really in luck's way to get so quiet and good-looking a young woman to have me for her husband, and me going on for sixty too.

There was no preparation for the wedding—I did not see any signs of even a new dress which Rachel might be working at. We were not well off enough for display, and we had not put any money by; we did not even intend to ask Mrs. Twitters or Mrs. Risbeck to the wedding. It was to be an extremely quiet affair, 'with the shadow of the river on it,' Rachel said with a sigh.

Two things happened a week before the day we had fixed upon to be married, and they happened so closely one after another, that it looked as if it was to be or as if it was not to be, according to one's way of looking at it.

I woke up one afternoon earlier than usual after my day's 'pitch'—that is, my sleep after duty on the pier—and went downstairs to chat with Rachel for a little while over her work. Mrs. Twitters was not at home, and Rachel was not at work, for I did not hear the click-click of the sewing machine as I approached the room. I pushed open the door, and said in my usual tone, 'May I come in?' but Rachel did not answer. I went in without invitation, thinking that the room was deserted; but there was Rachel sitting at the table, looking at a small photograph on glass, with a cheap gilt frame round it. Her hands were supporting her head, and her elbows were planted firmly on the table, and oh! the look of misery upon her face. I had never seen her look like that before.

'Why, Rachel, whose portrait have you got there?' I asked.

She sprang up with a half scream, and thrust the photograph in her side-pocket very hastily, standing to do so, and trembling very much. She opened her mouth to answer me, but no words came from it.

'Why, I have quite scared you, child,' I said; 'you must not get so nervous as all this.'

'I am more mad than nervous,' she replied; 'I have been mad, oh! these last two years, David.'

'Tut, nonsense! What's the picture about?'

'About the past,' she answered very sharply now, and with a look that reminded me of the promise I had made.

'Ah! yes, yes, I had forgotten. Your pardon, Rachel; I won't ask any more questions. I can guess whose portrait that is, and that's enough for me.'

'You!'

'But I don't want to see the villain. I am only sorry to find you are thinking of him still.'

'You are mistaken,' was her slow response; 'very much mistaken.'

'Well, I hope I am.'

I tried to think I might be, but it was not a pleasant matter for reflection, so late in the day as it was of our engagement, and so close upon the time that she would call me husband. I did not get over it very readily. I had not got over my dull looks, my absent answers to her, when Em's husband, whom I had not expected to see in London for a long while, came that very afternoon into the house almost like a ghost, and startled me with his loud, hearty greeting.

And like a ghost, Rachel Seeley regarded him—like a ghost risen from the dead. John Grayson stared at her with an amazement he could not disguise, and stammered out at last her Christian name.

'Rachel—you!' he said.

I looked from one to the other, fearing the truth, trying to make out what the truth of it all was, and praying that it was not as I thought. I sat there like a spectator at a play, and with these two raving in it, like the actors.

'Yes, it's Rachel,' she said at last; 'are *you* very much surprised to see me?'

'I am indeed.'

'You have not come in haste to find me, then,' she added scornfully.

'I did not know you were here,' he answered; 'I did not think you were alive.'

'Did not your doll of a wife tell you that her father's nurse was Rachel Seeley?'

'No,' he answered; 'she had forgotten your name when she came home.'

'It was convenient to forget, it was as well to forget,' she answered.

I had never seen Em's husband so utterly astonished, so completely thrown out of time and tune. He stood with his soft felt hat crushed between his strong brown hands, which were



shaking very much, and there were big tears in his eyes despite his efforts to keep firm.

'I did not know you were alive,' he said again in a hoarse voice, as if it were the one poor excuse which he could offer her.

'Oh! I tried hard to get out of the world, but this old man would not let me,' she replied; 'I did my best to die, God knows, and end it—all.'

'What does this mean?' I ventured to inquire, and Em's husband shook his head and said:

'Best not ask.'

'I have a right to ask.'

'I will tell you when she's gone,' he replied.

'She is not going away,' I explained. 'Her home is in this house; she will be my wife before the fortnight's over.'

'She! *your* wife?' gasped forth Em's husband, fairly bewildered now.

'Why not?' answered Rachel Seeley for herself.

'Because—but,' he added quickly, 'you must have guessed that I was his daughter's husband. I remember Em said you asked her many questions.'

'I asked if you were once gamekeeper at Hetton Court in Dorsetshire,' Rachel replied, 'and she said yes. I knew then you were the same man who led me wrong.'

'God forgive me!' he murmured, 'how one's sin comes round again! I was sorry, Rachel—God knows, I have been always very sorry. Had you stopped at Hetton, I would have made amends.'

'Stopped to become the jeer of the place, and to trust in *you*!' she answered bitterly.

'I can't ask you to believe me,' he said, 'and I can't bring back the past, Rachel.'

'I thought I might,' she said. Then turning to me suddenly, she added, 'David, though I would have been to you a faithful friend, still, I had hoped to be to him ever a reproach, ever a trouble that he should be afraid I would bring upon his wife, by telling of his treachery, of his love for me, as he called it, before he married her, and I should have told her some day what a villain he had been, and what he had made of me.'

'You went away; I never heard from you again,' said John.

'I should have been easy to find, had you wanted to find me,' was her stern reproach. 'But there, there! I am in the way now. You have business with your father-in-law, and I do not want to interfere with it.'

'But, Rachel—' I began.

She came to me slowly, with both hands extended.

'But you will forgive me, I know, because you have always thought so well of me; because your liking for me would have made of me your wife, and I *might* have settled down, and done no harm to him or his. I don't quite know,' she added, 'for I am very strange at times. Good-bye.'

'No—no—not good-bye! I am too old and lonely; it has gone too far now. Oh! don't leave me,' I implored.

'I think, David, that perhaps Heaven sent this man here so that I should not commit the wrong of marrying you, and wrong it would have been. For,' she continued, 'I was not worthy to be your wife. You are a good man.'

'You have atoned for the past by——' I began, when she stopped me with a wild cry, which blanched the face of both listeners.

'I have made no atonement,' she shrieked forth; 'I am the veriest wretch, and the cruellest of women. There is your child, John Grayson,' she said, drawing from her pocket the photograph which I had seen her with earlier that day; 'you have not asked after it yet—you have never thought of it till now, perhaps. Look at it!'

She thrust it into his hands, and he took it and stared at it dreamily.

'What has become——'

'It died when it was three years old; it was starving with its mother, and I killed it.'

'My God!' exclaimed the man.

'I drowned it in the river. *That* was the scream you heard, David—not mine. I was quite prepared and calm. I thought we were better out of this world, and would go together to the next. Your fault, John Grayson, as well as mine, that I took a little life away; your fault,' turning now to me, 'that I came back to my awful self, a murderess.'

'Horrible!' I whispered.

'Yes, I am a horrible woman; but I was good before I knew *him*,' she said. 'Now, which of you two will tell the police to follow me, and help to hang me? I don't care which it is. One of you I hope it will be.'

She moved towards the street, but no one followed her. She had stricken both of us to stone. As she passed John, she took the portrait from his nerveless hands, and, with that clutched to the bosom of her dress, went out into Cherry Gardens Court, and on beyond into the broader thoroughfare, like a woman walking in her sleep.

I never saw Rachel Seeley again.

### Deserted.

Ah! faded are the joys of summer,  
 And weary are my eyes for weeping ;  
 In this sad heart no blithe new-comer  
 Shall rouse again the joyous leaping.  
 Alone beside the river, flowing  
 All sullenly from shore to shore,  
 I sit and hear the sad wind blowing,  
 And stream and breeze sigh, ' Nevermore ! '

The boughs shall take again their brightness,  
 The stream shall dance to summer rays,  
 But nevermore comes back the lightness,  
 To this poor heart, of those old days ;  
 The meads may welcome back the swallow,  
 The roses blush with ruddy store,  
 And bright may bloom both ho't and hollow,  
 But this wan cheek shall bloom no more !

Alas! that faith should live in maiden,  
 And only falseness in her love !—  
 That I must bide with sorrow laden,  
 And he, light-hearted, freely rove !  
 I gave him all my young love's treasure,  
 I took for truth the vows he swore,  
 And now I dream in listless leisure,  
 And he,—he comes not any more !



*'I must bide with sorrow laden.'* Digitized by Google



## The Cobledick Tragedy.

It should be stated at the outset that this narrative is not designed in any degree as an attempt to elucidate the mystery that surrounds the Cobledick Tragedy. In fact, its connection with that memorable event is so purely collateral, that it is perhaps presumptuous to borrow the title. It would have been more accurate to have headed the narrative 'A Railway Accident.' But in such case it is probable that no one would have read it, or, glancing over the title, would have thought it was a column from a newspaper accidentally transferred to the 'Belgravia Annual.'

The sole connection of the story with the Cobledick Tragedy is that Mr. Smith had been invited to partake of that memorable dinner, had accepted the invitation, and was actually on his way to town to fulfil his engagement, when the events hereinafter related arose to prevent him. But for them, he would certainly have formed one of the company seated round that fateful board. Being singularly fond of plum-pudding, he would, beyond doubt, have eaten plenteously, and another victim would have been added to the already crowded list. That Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Cobledick should have been mysteriously removed in the very prime of life, and within three years of the date at which he would have become Lord Mayor, is a melancholy matter to this day talked of at city feasts, when the last dish has been served and gentlemen have time to turn their minds to higher thoughts. But except in respect of his family, or rather of such portions of it as survived the dinner, the loss was not irreparable. Like the hereditary monarch, the Alderman and Sheriff dies; long live the Alderman and Sheriff! Amurath to Amurath succeeds, and the far-reaching line of our Lord Mayors, singularly gifted as they invariably are in the graces of oratory, and adorned by all the charms of social life, is never broken.

It would have been otherwise had the author of 'Underground England' fallen a victim to the mysterious agency which, whether in the cloth, in the copper, in the flour, or in the fruit—whether added by murderous hands or developed by accidental forces—laid low the Cobledick household, and added a new chapter to the undiscovered mysteries of sudden death. None but he who planned the great work would have been worthy to fulfil it.

Ah! who shall wield again the magic power,  
And the lost clue regain!  
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower  
Unfinished must remain.

'Underground England' must have stood through all time a fragment—massive, if you will, but still a fragment.

Mr. Smith had run down to Chelmsford a few days previous to Christmas Day. Business not unconnected with his literary work had called him there, and circumstances conspired to delay his return till the last moment. The Cobledicks were to dine at six o'clock, an uncomfortably early hour except that it was Christmas Day; and, as the Alderman said, they would have the evening long.

He said this to meet what he supposed would be Mr. Smith's prejudices, seeing that he himself, following the city fashion, frequently dined at half-past five.

Josiah found that there was a train leaving Chelmsford at 4.13 on the afternoon of Christmas Day. It would land him in town at a quarter-past five, and thus give him time to run home, change his dress, and be at the Alderman's as the clock struck six. He would himself have preferred the plan originally designed,—that he should leave Chelmsford on Christmas Eve, so as to sleep at home, and move leisurely down to the Alderman's in the afternoon. But, as a rule, the last thing that happened to Josiah was to get his own way. The friends he was staying with in Chelmsford would not listen to his proposal to go home before the last moment. It was they who fixed the train for him—running it a little fine, Josiah thought. But they were all so kind and good, it was not for him to introduce controversial matter. So he meekly surrendered himself, and they in fulfilment of their contract delivered him at the station at Chelmsford with three minutes to spare.

The train was a small one, but the carriages were all pretty well filled. There was only one first-class, rather nearer the engine than the tail of the train. Josiah, walking past, saw that two outer compartments were quite filled, whilst the middle one had all the seats occupied, though there did not appear to be people to fill it. There was an Elderly Gentleman sitting in the corner seat, on what a cabby would call the near side. On the seat opposite to him was a pile of rugs; on the seat to his right were a portmanteau and one or two small bags.

This gentleman was of the kind that instinctively caused the warm and sedately flowing blood of Josiah to freeze. He cast an eye on one of these seats, and looking at the Elderly Gentleman with intent to ask whether it was engaged, he met a glance that really for the moment left him in some doubt whether his head had not been snapped off. The gentleman in the other corner was of quite a different type—a cheery, genial old fellow, who had had sixty years of life, and had evidently liked it very much. A buxom lady, who Josiah at once decided must be his wife, sat

opposite to him, and by her side a pretty girl, probably eighteen or twenty years old, a perfect and somewhat improved picture of what the buxom lady in the corner might have been at her age.

All this Josiah evolved from his inner consciousness when he looked in at the carriage. Having glanced up and down the station, and seeing no one about that seemed likely to claim either of the vacant seats, he was again about to ask whether they were engaged, when once more he felt that curious uncertainty as to whether or not his head had been snapped off, and felt that the eyes of the Elderly Gentleman were upon him. He walked down the train in search of a seat elsewhere, whether in second- or third-class carriage. He had paid for a first-class ticket, and would, had it been convenient to everyone, have liked to find a seat in a first-class carriage. But it was no use disturbing the Elderly Gentleman in the corner, and, as the journey was short, second- or third-class did not much matter.

‘Going up, sir?’ said the guard, bustling along.

‘Yes,’ said Josiah, hesitating.

‘What class?’

‘Well, I have a first-class ticket, but there doesn’t seem to be room.’

‘Room here, sir,’ said the guard; ‘make haste, we’re just going,’ and before Josiah quite knew where he was, he found himself in the carriage, with the happy family at one side and the Elderly Gentleman at the other.

‘Which side shall I sit on?’ said Josiah meekly.

‘Whichever you like,’ said a gruff voice from the corner, the owner of which made no effort to move either the rugs or the portmanteau.

Josiah would have preferred to ride on the side on which the ladies sat, with his back to the engine; but if he had done so, he would have faced the Elderly Gentleman. So he carefully and respectfully moved the portmanteau and the other bags, and sat between the Elderly Gentleman and the Cheerful Spouse.

Josiah himself had not very much baggage. A small Gladstone bag, a travelling rug and an umbrella was the full quantity. These he planted in positions of the greatest possible inconvenience to himself, and the least to other people, and prepared himself for an unpleasant journey.

But we never can see one inch beyond our noses. So far from being unpleasant, the journey was, whilst it lasted, one of the pleasantest he could remember. The Elderly Gentleman, after some preliminary growling, went to sleep. The Cheerful Gentleman in the other corner, with the buxom lady and the pretty girl,



took Josiah into the family circle from the moment he turned his mild and spectacled face towards them. Josiah did not talk much, but they rattled away, laughing and talking and treating Josiah as if they had known him for twenty years.

He was quite surprised when the train stopped and he found they were at Harold Wood. There were two reasons for surprise. First, that they had got so far in what seemed so short a time, and secondly, because there was no indication in the railway guide of intention to stop at this station. Between Chelmsford and London they were to stop only once, and that at Romford.

There was something the matter on the line, the Cheerful Gentleman surmised.

'There always is,' the Elderly Gentleman in the corner growled; 'never travel anywhere but something happens.'

'Well, now,' said the Cheerful Gentleman, 'I have travelled a good deal in my time, and I never was in a railway accident in my life; a little late, and that sort of thing, but nothing serious.'

'Ha!' said the Elderly Gentleman, 'my experience is different from that. I have travelled a good deal, and don't remember ever having got through without something unpleasant—carriage overcrowded, or engine breaks down, or the springs of the cushion broken, or another train runs into you.'

Except that there was a prospect of being late for dinner, Josiah did not regret this stoppage. He had meant to visit Harold Wood and look at some bits of broken pottery recently dug up, of which he was told the station-master had taken charge. Here was a chance thrown in his way, and Josiah, hastily jumping at it, left the carriage. All along the train the passengers were leaning out of the windows questioning the guard.

'It's all right,' he said, in answer to the one question put in many voices; 'the snow's drifted on the line two miles ahead. It's not very deep nor very long. I expect it's cleared by this time. But the telegraph wires are broken down with the weight of the snow, and we've had to send messengers on foot. We shall be off in ten minutes.'

Ten minutes would be quite enough for Josiah if he could find the station-master. The station-master's house was on the other side of the line, and Josiah, buttoning up his coat and bending his head against the snow-storm, skipped across the line.

The station-master was not in. He had gone up the line to meet the porter despatched to inquire if the road was clear. But his wife was at home, and, much impressed with the card which Josiah presented, and on which was printed 'Josiah Smith, F.R.S.A.,' she readily produced the treasure. It was a very curious

bit of pottery, though grievously damaged by the spade which dug it up. Josiah was engrossed in the occupation of fixing the pieces together, to get as nearly as possible at the original shape, when the station-master's wife came in and told him the train was going. She might even have put it more strongly and said it was gone, for when Josiah got to the door he beheld to his horror that it was already moving out of the station. Here was a cheerful prospect ! To be left at Harold Wood on Christmas Day, with his dinner ready in a comfortable house in Clapham Park, was a fearsome prospect.

Josiah, with all his meekness and retiring disposition, was a man of prompt decision. The train was not going at more than a walking pace, and there would be no danger in his entering his carriage—if he could find it. It would not do to waste time in looking for it. Any one would do. So, dashing across the line, he jumped on the footboard of the first carriage he reached, and, unfastening the door, burst in upon the astonished passengers. It was a third-class carriage, with plenty of room and a friendly welcome.

In the mean time the carriage in which Josiah had travelled thus far had been a scene of some excitement. When the guard came round with the warning cry 'Take your seats,' and the passengers who had been standing outside scrambled in amid the clangour of the bell, not a note of which had reached Josiah, the Cheerful Gentleman and the two ladies began to look out anxiously for the eminent antiquary whom they had been entertaining un-awares. There was his luggage on the seat—his bag bearing his initials, his umbrella, the travelling rug, and a copy of the 'Transactions of the Society,' which he had meant to read before he found how charming was his company.

'He's not coming back,' said the Elderly Gentleman, much annoyed by the persistence of the Cheerful Gentleman, who would lean out of the window in search of Josiah.

'Don't you think so?' said the lady anxiously; 'but he's left his things.'

'Oh! they'll be all right,' said the Elderly Gentleman gruffly; 'guards look after that sort of thing.'

'Yes,' said the young lady; 'but it will be so awkward for him without his luggage.'

'Perhaps he's got his only change of clothes in the bag,' said the Cheerful Gentleman, eyeing the baggage, and looking as profoundly concerned as if he had sustained some personal loss.

The bell ceased ringing, the engine shrilly shrieked, and the train began to move. 'I say! we're going,' shouted the Cheerful Gentleman. 'What's to be done?'

'Oh, sit down,' said the Elderly Gentleman; 'it'll be all right.'

'I don't think it will be all right,' said the buxom lady, bridling up. 'I dare say you wouldn't like to have got out, perhaps going to pay a visit, and forgotten your things.'

'Here,' said the Cheerful Gentleman, growing increasingly excited, 'I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's throw the things out, and the station-master will get them and hand them to him.'

No sooner said than done.

'Hi! station-master,' and out went the bag, dropped as gently as possible, but still not without grave concussion, on the snow. The two ladies, entering eagerly into the accomplishment of this happy thought, handed up the umbrella and the rug and the copy of the 'Transactions,' which in a moment were flung out of the window, whilst the Cheerful Gentleman, with his hands to his mouth, bellowed out instructions to the petrified station-master, who only knew that baggage was flying out of a first-class window.

'That's a good thing done,' said the Cheerful Gentleman, puffing with the unwonted exercise. 'He'll get them all right, and I dare say will be saved a lot of trouble.'

'Yes,' said the buxom lady, still bridling up, and with her eye on the Elderly Gentleman. 'You did quite right, my dear. I don't hold with people who sit comfortably in their seats and don't try to help a fellow-creature in misfortune. Was that the station-master calling out to you when you were throwing the things out?'

'No, it was some half-tipsy fellow down in a third-class carriage at the back. I could not see him very well, but he had no hat on, and had both his arms out gesticulating like a madman. When I looked again he was gone; I expect they had pulled him in.'

The person thus harshly judged was none other than Josiah. He had thought it possible that his friends in the other carriage might be looking out for him, and had gone straight to the window with intent to catch their eye and reassure them. What he beheld was, first, his bag dropped out of the window; then his travelling rug; next his umbrella, companion of many a stroll, and finally his last volume of the 'Transactions.'

The train stopped at Romford in proper order, and the appearance of Josiah at the carriage-door with agitated inquiry about his property created natural consternation. The Elderly Gentleman enjoyed it hugely. He chuckled and laughed till he nearly choked, which the young lady charitably hoped he would do as soon as ever he had left the carriage. It would be awkward, after the excitement of the journey, to have a choked passenger for company. If it could be done afterwards, and she not see it, she really would not be sorry. As for the Cheerful Gentleman, no words that he could find were adequate to express his regret. He had acted for

the best, and what could he do now? He would go at once and telegraph to the station-master at Harold Wood. Josiah must get in the carriage, and talk to his wife, and take no more trouble; which Josiah did, protesting that it was not of the slightest consequence, and rather hinting that if there was anything that could add to the pleasure of a railway journey, it was to have your baggage from time to time thrown out of the carriage window.

But presently the Cheerful Gentleman, with his face appreciably longer, came back with the station-master and a melancholy story. The wires were broken down, and there were no means of communicating with Harold Wood till seven o'clock, when the down train from London, stopping at every station, would call there. What was to be done? The Cheerful Gentleman proposed that he should wait at Romford till this train came up, go down for the luggage, bring it back, and deliver it at any address Josiah would name. In the mean while Josiah could go on and talk to his wife, which he appeared to think was an arrangement compensating for any of the current ills of life.

This Josiah would not hear of, nor did he listen with more favour to the proposal that a porter should be sent down, and that the luggage should come on by the train. The fact is,—and it was this that paled the cheek of Josiah when there was burned in upon his brain the sudden picture of his bag imbedded in the snow after being mysteriously ejected from the window,—the manuscript of ‘Underground England’ was locked within it. His umbrella, his travelling rug, and the other contents of the bag might take their chance; but this he must see to himself.

So it was arranged. The Cheerful Gentleman undertook to telegraph to Alderman and Sheriff Cobledick on arrival in town, and Josiah—smiling a little feebly, it is true, but still putting a brave face on it—protested that everything was of no consequence, made himself up for a dreary two hours’ wait at Romford, and saw the train that was to have taken him to London steam out of the station, the Cheerful Gentleman transformed into one of the most miserable of men, whilst the Elderly Gentleman was in danger of apoplexy owing to the violence of ill-repressed chuckling.

Josiah found his baggage all right at Harold Wood, and, catching the last train, arrived in Liverpool Street at nine o'clock. He had had no dinner, and it was now too late to go out to Clapham Park. But the papers next morning gave an account of the dinner of which, save for this odd accident, he would have partaken, and he felt that, but for the kindly interposition of the Cheerful Gentleman, he would have been at that moment even as Mr. Alderman and Sheriff Cobledick.

## for Love's Sake.

WHEN John Jackson returned, after a three years' absence, to Wyeland, he found that both his ancient home and himself had undergone more changes than he knew. The place struck upon him with a strange aspect, and had no answering welcome to give that which he extended to it. There were new names above the low-browed doors in the straggling High Street, and new faces beneath them. The deep peace of the once tranquil fields which ringed the little town was troubled by the incursions of navigator and collier. Coal had been found upon the Heath Estate, and blackened pit-frames and heaps of unsightly refuse made hideous the heart of rural solitude. The purling brook in which he had bathed as a lad was now an evil-smelling sewer. Many of his old acquaintances, at the sight of whom his heart leapt, failed to recognise him, and were painfully indifferent in their greetings when his identity was recalled to their minds. His old sweethearts were all either married or engaged, and, oppressed by the dignity of present or coming matronhood, would flirt no more. Some were even dead. All these things saddened him, and the happy boyhood of three short years ago seemed to be centuries away.

'I really do feel dreadfully old,' he said to his cousin Amy, as they sat together in the dusk, 'quite patriarchal. I must have known Adam and Noah, and been a personal friend of Abraham, only I've forgotten all about them. Everything here is so altered; both place and people seem changed completely. As I remember myself three years ago, I was rather a favourite here, and now nobody seems to remember or to take any interest in me. I suppose it is stupid, though natural, to expect to find things as you left them.'

'And do you find me changed?' asked Amy.

'More than anybody or anything else.'

'Not disagreeably, I hope?'

'Not disagreeably at all. Quite the contrary. You were a girl when I left you, and now you are a woman—and a very pretty woman too, Amy.'

'Ah!' said the girl, with a laugh and a half-sigh, '*you* are not changed, I see.'

'I am afraid I am, though,' answered John. 'The three years that have made a woman of you have made a man of me. One is a man at three-and-twenty, I suppose?'

'I suppose so,' said Amy, with another sigh. 'Ah, the dear old days! We shall never see them again, Jack.'

'We may see happier, Amy, though they will be spent apart.'

He could not see the pained look upon his companion's face, as she looked towards him through the gathering dusk, and, in his distraction, did not notice her quickened breathing.

'Why should they be spent apart?' she asked presently. 'Could not your work be as well done here as in London?'

'Quite as well. Perhaps better.'

'Then why not stay? Oh Jack, don't refuse! The house and the farm are my own now uncle has gone. You know how welcome you are. I have more than I can ever want. Mr. Sampson says the last year's income was over six hundred. What can I do with all that? Stay here, Jack, and let us revive old times.'

'No, Amy. Don't think me proud or ungrateful. But I must not be a pensioner even on your bounty, and that is what it would be——'

'Jack!' said the girl in a pained tone.

'That is what it would be, Amy; there is no other word for it. No; I must go back to London and work. I can see my way to bread and cheese now, and shall get something better, I hope, in a little time.'

The girl rose from her seat, and paced the room.

'Jack,' she broke out passionately, 'I cannot bear it. When I think of you toiling and slaving for bare life in London while I live in comfort here, and every crust I eat and every thread I wear bought by money that should have been yours, I feel as if I should go mad with shame and anger. It is shameful! What right had your father to beggar you to make me rich? I can't live here, and I won't. I'll go away and work as you do.'

'You are far too sensible, Amy, I am sure, to do anything so ridiculous. And whatever may have been my father's feelings regarding me, I believe he did the best thing possible in leaving the farm to you. Nothing but poverty would ever have made me work. I am of some use in the world as it is, and shall be more some day.'

The girl returned to her seat, and was silent for some little time. Then she asked:

'Tell me your plans, and your life in London.'

'There is not much to tell. My plans are simply to go on working till I can get a comfortable living for myself. My life is happy enough. I have at last learned the great secret, that the man who works is happier than the man who doesn't. I like my work, and I think I shall succeed in it.'

'What do you mean by "succeed"?''

'I think I shall make a little name for myself, and be well thought of by my fellow-workers in time, and that I shall be able to lead my own life in my own way.'

'Your ambition is more modest than it used to be, Jack.'

'Yes,' answered Jack, with a sad smile; 'a good deal more modest. I don't know anything better that could happen to a man who suffered under too high a notion of his own abilities than to be thrown on his own resources in the London press world. One can't turn a corner without coming across a dozen cleverer fellows than oneself. A man who starts with such ambitions as I had when I started, and who keeps them after such a three years' experience as I have had, is pretty likely, I should say, to be worthy of his own opinion.'

'Have you many friends in London?'

'I believe I have as many friends, Amy, as any man who ever lived. Real friends, I mean. I shall never be able to repay the kindnesses I have received from some of them. They are splendid fellows. Most of them might be more moral, and all of them might be more industrious; but they could not be more generous, more helpful, more happy in their friends' success. I believe firmly, Amy, that if you want friendship and all the virtues it breeds, you must come to Bohemia for them. I don't want to disparage respectability; but it does seem to me that directly a man begins to pay income-tax he loses his sympathies.'

'I have heard that theory before,' said Amy. 'But you may find friendship outside Bohemia, Jack. I don't know that my sympathies have degenerated at all, although I pay income-tax, or at least Mr. Sampson pays it for me.'

'You will never be anything but what you always have been, Amy—the dearest girl in the world.'

Simple and chivalrous soul as he was, he could not have conceived a more cruel torment than the tone of voice and form of words wherein he spoke. Gratitude and tender regard and playful affection were all expressed there, and yet the tears welled up in the girl's heart as she listened, and, but that they were held resolutely back, would have dimmed the eyes that regarded their idol through the fast gathering gloom. She was silent, fearing to trust her voice, and Jack, too, held his peace for a little time.

'You were always my confidante in the old time, Amy,' he said presently. 'A man must have somebody to tell his secrets to, at least I must, and I should like to tell you a little story.'

She waited, more than ever afraid to speak, and he went on, taking her silence for consent.

'You have heard of Mrs. Farnaby, the authoress? A friend of hers took me to one of her evening receptions and introduced me, and she was kind enough to give me a standing invitation for the season. It was the one house that was open to me in London, and I cannot tell you how dear those evenings were to me, and how they stood out from the rest of the dreary week. One night I found myself seated next to a young lady whom I had not seen before. She struck me particularly by reason of a strong likeness I saw, or fancied I saw, in her to you. I spoke to her on some commonplace topic, and we fell into a conversation that lasted the whole evening, until she went away in the company of an elderly lady who seemed to be her *chaperon*, or guardian, or companion, whatever the phrase is. She was there next night, and every night after, and we were together a great deal. I assure you honestly, Amy, that until the season came to a finish, and Mrs. Farnaby's receptions ceased for the year, I had no notion of my real feelings towards the girl. But it struck me suddenly, as I was dressing for the last of the evenings, that I was in love with her. I went to the house with the intention of doing something decisive—what, I did not know myself. She did not come. I waited the whole evening, hoping for her appearance long after all reasonable chance had passed, and at last went home, feeling as I had never felt before. I could not work or sleep for thinking of her.

'Nearly four months passed before I saw her again. I was walking in the Regent's Park late one afternoon in December. There was half-frozen snow on the ground, and more in the sky waiting to fall. I was thinking about *her*, and I felt dull and miserable. I sat down upon a bench and lit my pipe, and tried to drive her from my mind by thinking of a story I was writing at the time. But I could think of nothing but her. The night was closing in, and a park-keeper came and told me that the gates would soon be closed and I must go. As I rose to obey, a woman's figure flutered by me. The light was dim under the trees, and she passed quickly at some distance. But I knew her. It was she, the girl I had lost.

'I could not tell you, Amy, how the story she told moved me. It was a commonplace story enough, I suppose. Her aunt, the lady who had accompanied her to Mrs. Farnaby's, had lost the income on which they had lived, by a piece of heartless rascality. The injustice was so flagrant that I cannot conceive how the law of any country could countenance it. But legal redress was impossible according to the highest opinions, and they were ruined. They had never been rich, but they had had enough for comfort, and now



they were reduced to complete poverty, and were earning their living as best they could. A far-away relative had discovered them—a successful man of business with whom they had never had any communication for many years. He had offered them assistance, and for some time their burden had been greatly lightened by his aid, though they still worked for themselves and preserved their independence as much as they could. Their relative's help had been continued for some time, they suspecting no ulterior motive, when one day he proposed to the aunt for the hand of the girl. The aunt made no definite reply, merely promising to use her influence on his behalf. The offer was refused—and refused, I believe, Amy, for my sake—and he withdrew his assistance, and left them to fight their way as best they could. She told me all this quietly and calmly as we walked together. I can tell you what she said, but what actor could hope to imitate the calm despairing resignation of her voice and manner. I told her that if she would put her destiny into my hands, she should never know a want I could supply. I told her that I loved her, and had loved her since the first moment I had seen her. I pleaded hard—all in vain. Her place, she said, was with her aunt, to whom she owed everything, and she would never consent to cripple me by adding the burden of their poverty to my own. I argued against her resolution—all in vain. She was adamant. She said, frankly and freely, that she returned my affection, but she begged me to believe that any renewal of my proposal would only increase her trials. I longed to offer her assistance, but I dared not do it, and she left me, begging me to make no attempt to follow her. For days after I haunted the spot on which we parted, and at last I saw her. She told me that she had secured an engagement as companion to a maiden lady, and that she left London next day. I renewed my pleadings, still in vain. I asked for a souvenir, some little trifle by which to remember her, and she gave me a photograph. I have never seen her since.'

There was silence for a moment, broken only by the twitter of the leaves in the garden without.

'A woman worth loving,' said Amy when she could trust her voice.

He heard the words, and knew nothing but what they told him. Filled with his own thoughts, he had no wit to read the heart of the woman who spoke—and speech is surely in many ways the weakest dialect of human language.

'Have you the photograph with you?' she asked presently.

He took it from his pocket and gave it into her hand, which trembled a little as she took it. She walked to the window to

examine it by the faint light that yet filtered through the leaves.

‘What is her name?’ she asked.

‘I shall never speak her name again, Amy. Do not ask me.’

‘Car je l’aime trop pour que je dis  
Qui j’ose aimer,  
Et je veux mourir pour ma mie  
Sans la nommer,’

quoted Amy, with an attempt at a laugh which was hardly a success. ‘But suppose I know it?’

‘How could you know it?’ asked Jack.

‘Because I am a witch,’ answered Amy, ‘and know everything. Come, will you tell me, or shall I tell you?’

‘Tell me.’

‘What do you say to Ada Stanley?’

Jack rose to his feet, thunderstruck; but before he could speak, a light step was heard advancing along the gravel of the garden path, and a female form darkened the window.

‘The lady herself,’ continued Amy, ‘just in the nick of time. Miss Ada Stanley, Mr. John Jackson.’

A light knock came at the door, and a neat and rosy-cheeked country lass entered the room, bearing in her hand a lamp. She was followed by a middle-aged man, tall and strongly built, and dressed in dark grey broadcloth. A noticeable man, with a peculiar set expression on his face.

‘Good evening, Mr. Tescam,’ said Amy. ‘You know my cousin, I think.’

Mr. Tescam bowed, and extended his hand towards John, who took it mechanically, without removing his eyes from Ada, who stood trembling just within the window.

‘I was just thinking of taking a stroll in the garden, Mr. Tescam,’ went on Amy, ‘if you would favour me with your arm. I’ve no doubt my cousin and Miss Stanley will be able to amuse themselves for a little time without our help.’

The stranger offered his arm with a formal and rather old-fashioned courtesy, and they left the room together and passed up the garden walk in silence. They reached a rustic bench beneath the drooping branches of an aspen, and here Amy quitted her companion’s arm and took her seat.

‘You have something to say to me,’ she said wearily. All the sprightliness of a moment ago had vanished.

‘Yes,’ said Mr. Tescam, slowly ‘I have something to say to you which is soon said—I have come to say “good-bye.”’

She could see that the set expression of his face, dimly dis-

cernible through the evening gloom, had deepened; and that the hand which held the lappel of his coat clutched it hard.

'Why "good-bye"?' she asked.

'It is best,' he said simply, struggling hard with some inward passion which he could scarce repress. 'So long as I remain here, so long as I see you, I must speak, and I know that there is no hope; I must get away from you and fight it down. I am trembling now, only at the pressure of your hand upon my arm and at the sound of your voice.'

The clutching fingers tightened in their grasp, as if they would have stilled the beating of the heart below.

'When I think,' he went on, with his gathering passion battling with the strong restraint he put upon himself—'when I think that another suitor might appear who should be more fortunate, and who should become to you all that I dream, day and night, of being to you—when I think that I should stand by and see you happy in his love, nursing *his* children, I feel as if I should go mad. I *am* mad now, at this moment, when I think of it.'

Had the successful rival whom his heated imagination had conjured up stood before him in veritable flesh and blood, as he stood there with extended hands clenched before him, his life would not have been worth a pin's purchase. With a strong effort he controlled himself and went on, after a vain attempt to moisten his dry lips with his drier tongue.

'You see,' he said. 'If the mere thought of such things have such an effect upon me, what would their reality be? I must go away and leave you. It is the only thing to be done. I have no right to persecute you with my protestations, and so long as I remain here I must speak.'

He paused, perhaps expecting some answer, but she was silent.

'Good bye,' he said, extending his hand.

'What if I will not say "good-bye"?''

He withdrew his hand with a quick catch of his breath.

'What if I asked you not to go, but to remain?'

Again he made no answer, but stood looking at her through the dusk, breathing heavily.

'I do ask you to remain,' she said, rising, 'and to forget the answer I have given you.'

She had expected some wild outbreak of passion in answer to these words. But all he did was to throw one arm about her and press her to the heart whose quick throb was audible in the utter stillness of the night. And so, for a moment, they stood.

'There is one thing of which I must warn you,' Amy continued. 'If I come to you, it is with no more than the clothes I wear. I do not do you the injustice to think that you love me for what you think I shall bring you; but I must, in justice to myself and you, tell you this. This property is mine so long as I remain single. When I marry, it passes to the next-of-kin, John Jackson. You knew my uncle, and how strange his ideas were upon many subjects. If you choose to take me, penniless as I am, I am yours.'

He bent over her, murmuring inarticulate words of passionate love. What did he care for lands or money?

'I have enough for both,' he said. 'Let it go, without another thought.'

'Egad,' said a voice at which they both started. 'I seem to have got out of the frying-pan into the fire.'

'Good evening, Mr. Quodling,' said Amy, calmly. 'You couldn't have come at a luckier moment.'

'I'm glad to hear it,' returned Mr. Quodling, with a short fat laugh. 'I was beginning to think I was very much in the way. There's a couple in the parlour—your cousin John and Miss Stanley—in a state of most complicated misery, chiefly due, I think, to my appearance. So I relieved 'em of my company and came out here, and, by Jove!—what quarter's the moon in, Tescam?'

Mr. Quodling was the one solicitor and land-surveyor of the district, and was a widower and a misogynist, having expended the whole of his admiration of the fair sex (at least, according to local report) upon the composition of the epitaph of Mrs. Quodling, deceased.

'Mr. Tescam,' said Amy, ignoring the solicitor's flippancy, 'has done me the honour to request my hand.' (Mr. Quodling whistled.) 'I have accepted his proposal, and have informed him of the clause in my uncle's will which provides that the property I at present hold goes, on my marriage, to my next-of-kin—my cousin John, of course.'

Mr. Quodling stared blankly at the speaker.

'Mr. Tescam is quite content with the arrangement,' proceeded Amy, with a calmly business-like aspect and tone, 'so that you will consider the matter settled, and take the necessary steps.'

'Why, what on earth——?' began Quodling, with a bewildered face, but Tescam cut him short.

'Miss Jackson has stated the case quite correctly,' said he; 'and I hope there will be no more delay than necessary.'

'But I protest,' said Mr. Quodling, 'against my client robbing herself in——'

'Don't trouble yourself to protest at all, Mr. Quodling,' said Amy. Then, in a rapid undertone, 'Be quiet, and say nothing. What business is it of yours?'

She moved away with Tescam, and left Quodling *planté là*.

'Is the woman mad?' gasped the lawyer, 'or is it a dream? There's no such provision in the will at all—I know it by heart.'

He stopped, as though struck by an idea which aided him in the solution of the difficulty.

'Well, I'm blessed! this *is* a go!' he exclaimed. And, having thus relieved his feelings, he followed the couple into the house.

'Jack,' said Amy, as she entered on Tescam's arm, 'I have something to tell you which concerns us both. Sit still, Ada—I am by no means sure that it doesn't concern you too.'

With this preface she repeated what she had already communicated to the lawyer, upon whom Jack turned for assurance. Mr. Quodling, with his hands thrust to the bottom of his pockets, and his eyes examining the ceiling, backed Amy's statement, with the internal addition, 'Lord forgive me!'

Jack sat, glaring about him, stunned by his unexpected accession to fortune.

'Am I mad?' he asked, unwittingly quoting Mr. Quodling.

'Oh no,' said that worthy, '*you* ain't mad.' He bestowed a glance on Amy, as though to say, '*That* way madness lies,' and turned his eyes again to the ceiling.

Jack crossed the room to where Ada sat, the colour of a peony, and took her hand.

'Amy,' he said, 'confidence for confidence—you have introduced me to your future husband. Let me make known to you—my future wife.'

HENRY GEORGE MURRAY.





That the storm's hand never ceases to be busy!

## A Sermon from Nature.

SAD were the winter nights,  
 Hoarse with wind's roaring,  
 Vanished all earth's delights  
 'Neath the rain's pouring ;  
 In the mirk midnight sky  
 Flickered wan fires,  
 Coldly and fitfully,  
 - Like dead desires !

Like sprites unblest that roam  
 Where wild waves welter,  
 E'en in the grave no home  
 Finding, nor shelter,  
 Flamed the drear northern lights  
 O'er earth distressed,  
 All through the winter nights  
 Preaching unrest.

Worn with much storm and stress,  
 Earth sank to sleeping,  
 Cloud-curtain comfortless  
 Light from her keeping ;  
 Then in the dawning grey  
 Rose a still voice,  
 Whispering far away,  
 ' Wake and rejoice ! '

Over the southern sea,  
 Aye drawing nearer,  
 Swelled the brave harmony  
 Stronger and clearer ;  
 Waves gave a burden back,  
 From shore and fell  
 Fleeted the brooding rack,  
 Charmed by that spell.

Now higher mounts the sun  
 In might ascendent,  
 Hills that showed drear and dun  
 Shine forth resplendent ;  
 Leaf, bud, and bent alike  
 Flash back the ray,  
 Crowned are mead, shaw, and dyke  
 With silver spray.

Slowly the ocean heaves,  
 Hued as the beryl,  
 Now to its image cleaves  
 No thought of peril :  
 Nothing it tells of care  
 Nor dread concealing,  
 Only a promise fair  
 Of mirth and healing.

Lie down and take thy rest  
 Where gulls are sweeping  
 Over the ocean's breast,  
 Where waves are leaping  
 Out on the sunny reef ;  
 Making good cheer,  
 Rest thee, and win relief  
 From doubt and fear !

Life is not all a-mort,  
 Though night be bitter,  
 Though all too swift and short  
 Morning-time's glitter !  
 Why will ye backward gaze,  
 Nursing your sorrow ?  
 Fair shine our passing days,  
 Why not each morrow ?

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.



## Mrs. and Miss Bellingham.

### I.

THE career of Sir Algernon Everton, K.C.B., had been unambitious, perhaps, but it had been certainly prosperous altogether. He had entered the Government service quite as a young man, and had risen gradually to a position of real importance and distinction. It is true that from time to time the interest of certain political personages had been exercised on his behalf; but, nevertheless, his own merits had been in truth amply sufficient to justify his advancement. He had been an excellent clerk; he was now judged to be an admirable commissioner. He was so well versed in the traditions of his office; he could boast so prolonged an experience as a Government servant. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the time being contemplated any changes in the fiscal arrangements of the country, he invariably took counsel with Sir Algernon in the first instance. For Sir Algernon was 'a learned Theban' on such subjects. He was one of those exalted functionaries, largely concerned in the national taxation and assessment, who fill dignified positions at Somerset House, drawing very handsome salaries, occupying easy-chairs in Turkey-carpeted apartments, much splendour of stationery strewn their leather-covered tables, and with obsequious troops of clerks and messengers prompt to attend their presence and receive their dictates immediately upon the sounding of their hand-bells.

Sir Algernon's friends said of him that he did not look more than fifty, but there were several critics who alleged of him that he must assuredly be upwards of sixty. All agreed that he was 'well preserved,' while it was not suggested that he resorted to any special artifices to repair or to conceal those injuries of wear and tear which the flight of time and the processes of nature inflict upon humanity. He dressed with very good taste and judgment, and he took great care of himself. His figure retained much of the slimness of youth, if something of the stiffness of age affected his movements. His thin grey hair was heedfully arranged, as though he valued it the more because of its scarcity; his chin and cheeks were closely shaven; there were people who described him as looking like an 'elderly light comedian.' This may have been further due to a certain studied and rather elaborate grace of manner which distinguished him. He laid

great stress upon 'manner.' He had been known to assert that the state, if not the universe, was governed by 'manner.' As a politician he had not asserted himself, or perhaps had been careful not to commit himself. He did not withhold, however, that he entertained strong views touching the adjustment of taxation. The nation that thoughtfully and properly adjusted its taxation was, he maintained, well assured of happiness and prosperity. A people could hardly ask for more, he opined, than that its taxation should be duly adjusted, and that its rulers and governors should be graced with 'manner.'

Sir Algernon had not absolutely married for money, but accident or prudence on his own part had brought him in the neighbourhood of money, and he had married a rich wife. It was not an objection in his eyes that Miss Hester Simkins' fortune had resulted from her progenitors' connection with the soap and candle trade. Her gold smelt neither of 'mottled' nor of tallow. She was not beautiful, nor was she particularly accomplished; but she was a pleasant, amiable, sagacious sort of woman, and she fairly adored her Algernon. She was captivated by his grace of bearing and courtly airs; by his good looks—as a young man he had been deemed to be remarkably handsome. To her ears his method of speech, his measured utterance, his modulated tones, had been as exquisite music. She accepted devoutly that wifely creed—which not every wife adopts, however—that the whole world might be ranged without discovery of the superior, or even the equal, of her husband. He had at no time professed for her any extravagance of affection; he had never posed before her as a Romeo; the system of 'manner' of which he was the advocate and representative scarcely permitted any expression in a sentimental direction. But certainly he had always treated her with respect and consideration, and even with kindness, the ways and habits of the man both physical and mental being borne in mind. They had lived together happily enough, as all agreed who had no very sublimated views as to the nature and constitution of happiness. One child only, a son—Herbert, generally known as Bertie Everton—had been born of their marriage.

Hester Simkins, at all times proud of her husband, even when he was only to be described rather humbly as 'a clerk in Somerset House,' was prouder still when he attained his present advanced state of honour and dignity, and could boast himself K.C.B., and 'one of Her Majesty's Commissioners.' She did not long survive, however, to share in Sir Algernon's success and preferment, or to be addressed as Lady Everton.

For some time after his wife's decease Sir Algernon lived in a

condition of what may be called elegant repose and retirement. He took possession of a small house in Mayfair—‘a bijou residence,’ as the auctioneer had it, ‘well suited to a bachelor of position.’ He entered society but little, although he did not wholly renounce its pleasures. His official cares and the education of his son were, he said, sufficient occupation for him. But nobody quite credited the announcement.

Presently he was often asked what he intended to do with Bertie. He answered with an air of candour, ‘Bertie is a very good boy, but he is not clever. That is the fact; I cannot disguise it from myself. Otherwise I should be tempted to be ambitious concerning him. I should look forward to his career very hopefully. As it is, I think the Government service offers him the best opening. It will ensure him a provision for life, and will not overtax his abilities. He must be content to begin, at any rate, as his father began before him.’

Sir Algernon was careful, however, that Bertie should not enter the office of which his father was chief. ‘Invidious remarks,’ he said, ‘might be made.’ Bertie, having passed the Civil Service examination very creditably, duly received his appointment as a junior clerk in the statistical department of the Ways and Means branch of the Government service. It appeared that he had given satisfaction to the leading functionaries of his office. He was punctual in his attendance, and he wrote a good hand. He pretended to little of his father’s charm of manner, but he was gentlemanly nevertheless; he bore himself pleasantly, and he was what is generally known as ‘well-spoken.’ He was good-looking, if his face lacked expression somewhat, and his features were rather heavily moulded. He presented little personal resemblance to his father. Indeed, Sir Algernon had been heard to say regretfully of his son that he was ‘a thorough Simkins.’ Still, Bertie was popular in his own circle. He dressed soberly in well-fitting clothes; his hair was clipped as closely as the hair of the other young men of the period; his collars and cuffs were as white and stiff as any other collars and cuffs discoverable in London. He was of symmetrical figure, and he danced well. He was not shy, and he owned the valuable social quality of always having something to say, if it might not be ever anything of particular value, novelty, or significance. Into further description of Bertie Everton it is perhaps needless to enter.

## II.

SIR ALGERNON and his son were dining together, and as they dined they discussed many topics pleasantly enough. Sir Algernon made it a rule to maintain his magic of manner, even in the presence of Bertie. He always treated Bertie with the same gracious politeness he accorded even to the general public addressing complaints or inquiries to the Commissioners at Somerset House. But of course the father permitted himself a certain freedom, not to say levity or jocosity, of speech which the commissioner could scarcely have indulged in.

'What may be the attraction at Beachville?' Sir Algernon was asking. 'Is it the presence of the Bellinghams?'

'Well, it does so happen that the Bellinghams are at Beachville,' Bertie answered, reddening a little.

'So I heard. And does the fact account for your frequent visits to Beachville from Saturday to Monday?'

'Well, I'm fond of Beachville, it's so wonderfully bracing; and I think the Bellinghams are very nice,' said Bertie evasively. 'Mrs. Bellingham is considered to be a particularly fine woman.'

'Yes. And Adela Bellingham is thought to be a very pretty girl, isn't she?'

'Very pretty, I think. I didn't know that you knew the Bellinghams, though.'

'I knew Jack Bellingham very well at one time. He has been dead some years now. He was in the diplomatic service. I rather lost sight of him at last. He was one of those men who are generally said to be nobody's enemy but their own. He ran through a good deal of money, I believe. But I suppose he left some behind him for his widow and his child?'

'I hardly know,' said Bertie. 'Mrs. Bellingham seems to be well off enough. But of course she does not speak of her pecuniary circumstances to me. She wouldn't, you know.'

'I suppose not, as *yet*,' observed Sir Algernon, musingly. 'But no doubt she has means more or less. According to my experience, every woman has *some* money. I mean, of course, the women one meets in society. There is always an uncle or an aunt, a godfather or a godmother, who has been putting money by in a stocking and is good for a legacy some day or other. Still, Miss Bellingham is hardly to be accounted a good match, unless her face is to be accepted as a fortune. She comes of very good-looking people, certainly. As a young man Jack Bellingham was singularly handsome. Of Mrs. Bellingham it is enough to say

that she is one of the Vanes, and that her mother was a Beamish. The Vanes and the Beamishes have always been, you know, what modern slang calls "professional beauties." But of course, like a good many other fine women, she's not so young as she has been.'

'She speaks very frankly about her age. She was married at seventeen, it seems. She is now, as she owns, thirty-five.'

'And she calls that frankness? But there is always a leaven of fraud about a woman's frankness. However, there is no reason why she should be more accurate about her age than others are. She's quite right to be and to look as young as she can as long as she can. Of course, some day or other Time comes round with his census-paper and insists upon having it accurately filled up.'

'I wish you could take a trip to Beachville, sir, and renew your acquaintance with the Bellinghams. I first met them, you know, at Lady Loveless's in the winter.'

'I have thought of running down to Beachville for a day or two. I want change badly enough, and what people call ozone, without perhaps knowing what that means. Nobody talked about ozone when I was a young man. But that's a long time ago, you'll say. If I should go down to Beachville I shall, no doubt, renew my acquaintance with the Bellinghams. However, you will understand that I don't intend to play Mephistopheles to your Faust, Bertie.'

'I don't think I quite understand, sir.'

'I mean that I am not going to walk about and away with Martha at the back of the scene, while you philander in the foreground with Gretchen. No doubt Miss Adela Bellingham plays Gretchen to perfection.'

'You'll find Mrs. Bellingham much too young and too good-looking for the part of Martha, sir.'

'Well then, Bertie, you shall walk about and away with Mrs. Bellingham while I philander with Gretchen. Or we'll take turns.'

'All right, sir,' said Bertie, laughing. 'But I am quite sure you'll like Mrs. Bellingham.'

'And Miss Bellingham?'

'And Miss Bellingham too, without doubt.'

'But there is one thing I should wish thoroughly to understand, Bertie,' said Sir Algernon in a more serious tone. 'You are not engaged to Miss Bellingham? There is no secret agreement between you?'

'Oh dear, no,' answered Bertie. 'I am not engaged to Miss Bellingham.'

'You love her very much?'

‘I prefer to say that I admire her very much,’ Bertie explained.

‘And you’ve told her so?’

‘Well, not exactly. But I suppose, sir, women discover for themselves whether one does or does not admire them. No one could help admiring Miss Bellingham.’

‘If I were you, Bertie,’ observed Sir Algernon, ‘I’d stop at admiration—it’s a sort of half-way house on the road to love, and forms a convenient resting-place. Up to admiration the way is safe and easy enough; after that it may chance to become rough and flinty and perilous; there may be lions in the path. Besides, you are too young to undertake the journey: leave it to others who are older or more foolish. You know, Bertie, really you ought not to think of getting married for some years to come, at any rate.’

‘I suppose not, sir,’ said Bertie, with something of a rueful air.

‘Look upon love and matrimony as luxuries you cannot afford, as grapes out of your reach and therefore sour. You’ll grow tall enough by-and-by to secure them, or you’ll be able to mount upon your cash-box some day and lay hands upon them easily. At present you are in receipt only of a small salary paid quarterly in return for the valuable services you render the government of your country. Some day, of course, all your poor mother’s money will be yours. I mean when I go aloft, as Tom Bowling puts it.’

‘Don’t speak of such a thing, sir, please,’ said Bertie with simple tenderness.

### III.

MISS ADELA BELLINGHAM, as it chanced, had something of a Gretchen look; she was so blue-eyed and flaxen-haired and fair-complexioned. But necessarily she was a Gretchen of modern date, a Gretchen of fashion and society, who laid stress upon silks and satins, gloves and boots, rings and bangles, frills and furbelows of the latest mode. She was very composed of manner, her features boasted an exquisite refinement and regularity, her voice was a most musical contralto. She looked tranquillity; she seemed always imperturbably sedate and severe. Her hands, excellently white and of beautiful form, were invariably as cold and plump and soft as dead partridges.

Her mother was rather of the Juno order of beauty. But Mrs. Bellingham was more majestic of figure than of manner. She was very vivacious, and owned what is known as a flow of conversation. She permitted herself much sprightliness of conduct. She was dark-browed, black-eyed, brilliant of complexion; she

was crested with coils of rich brown hair; she was red-lipped, and her teeth were supremely white and regular, if rather large of size. Her laughter had something dazzling about it, like the flashing of diamonds under the electric light: her eyes were so radiant, and her amply displayed teeth so polished, pearly, and gleaming.

Adela Bellingham had not outgrown that period of feminine life which is devoted to ardent friendship of the schoolgirl sort. She corresponded copiously with a certain Miss Julia Silverlock. The post-office at this time carried many letters beginning with 'Dearest Julia,' or 'Dearest Adela,' and signed 'Your devoted Adela,' or 'Your most affectionate Julia.' The young ladies were wont, indeed, to interchange many curious and interesting confidences. This is how Adela wrote to Julia from Beachville:—

'Yes, my dearest Julia, we have settled down at Beachville, for how long I cannot tell you. You know, or rather you do not know, how changeable mamma is, and how constantly occupied we are in demolishing to-day the arrangements we decided upon yesterday. But I suppose we shall stay some while. The place is very breezy and bracing, and the fine air is doing us both good. Mamma's neuralgia—or what she calls her neuralgia—I think it's simply rheumatism—is much better. She attributes the improvement to warm sea-baths, &c., and she is quite in love with the doctor here. She has, you may remember, a remarkable tendency to raptures and rhapsodies upon light provocation. But do not be surprised to hear of our being on the wing again soon. We are birds of passage now, always. My dearest Julia, ensconced in her father's comfortable vicarage, can have little sympathy with our wandering life. We have no home; only lodgings here and there, with perhaps a furnished house for some few weeks of the London season. Then we pay visits to friends and are more or less welcome guests in various parts of the country, or we go abroad for a little while, or come down for a little repose at such places as this Beachville. At present we have very nice apartments near the pier and esplanade with a good side view of the sea. You ask if mamma and I are good friends again. Well, yes, pretty well. But the old subject of quarrel often recurs. I know how to keep my temper and to hold my tongue. I wish mamma had equal command of herself, but, I can assure you, I am severely tried at times. Mamma is as anxious as ever—perhaps even more anxious than ever—that I should find a husband: as if husbands could be picked up, whether they liked it or not, like crooked pins on the pavement; or as if women could get married entirely of their own accord, without waiting to be asked. We are like cabs,

my dear; we must remain upon the stand, let the weather be wet or shine, nor quit the ranks until a fare calls us. The last cab—battered and rusty and shabby, with a blind, weak-kneed, broken-down horse—doesn't it always remind you of an old maid, a faded wall-flower, thin and miserable, overlooked and forgotten, whom no one will choose for a partner, or take down to supper? But mamma seems to think that the men are the cabs, and that we can summon and engage them simply by holding up our fingers and calling "Hi!" She so impresses upon me the importance of marriage; it is, to her thinking, the whole and sole duty of woman. She upbraids me so with missing what she calls my "chances," throwing away my opportunities. I am too coy or too capricious; I don't give men sufficient encouragement; I might "lead them on" a little more. Poor bashful timid creatures, one would think they were pet lambs, or fawns, or doves! Isn't it horrid? But it is no use mamma talking. I can't and I won't be hustled into marriage. I am not going to fling myself into the arms of the first passer-by; or drop, like an over-ripe plum, into the wide-open mouth of any booby who likes to wait long enough below. I am not at all anxious to be married. I have seen no man yet I should care to accept as my husband. Besides, I can wait. Surely I am young enough still, and I have always, as you know, the little independence left me by old Aunt Fanny, upon which I can retire when I choose. It provides me with my dresses at present, but I could really live upon it if need were. I often think that mamma's desire for my speedy marriage really masks in some measure her own anxiety for a second mate. I am sure she means to marry again at the earliest opportunity. In such case, of course, I should not continue to live with her. A step-father! It would be too odious. I really think that if mamma does marry I will never speak to her again. I shall have too great a contempt for her.

'Yes, Bertie Everton is here, and he is, as you say, a nice boy. Nicer, indeed, than a good many boys. Still, I don't care so much about boys. They are so full of themselves, for one thing; so occupied with their appearance, their boots, their neck-ties and collars, &c. After all, is not too much stress laid upon the advantages of youth? Surely it only consists in the probability of living rather longer than those who came into the world at an earlier date. And what is that worth, after all? And has not youth its disadvantages, I would ask? How silly it often is, how confined in its notions, how small and selfish and absurdly prejudiced, how deficient it is in knowledge! Why should admiration be awarded to immaturity and inexperience? But mamma is very full of Bertie Everton. She thinks highly of his prospects.



He is only a government clerk at present, but he is the heir to a fortune, it seems. She even maintains that he is clever, and must rise some day, because of his own merits, to some high position in the state or the political world. It may be so, but I confess I don't see it. Still, I like Bertie well enough. We are great friends, indeed. He is good-natured and well behaved. One can see that he has been accustomed to society. If he's not very wise, he's nice to look at. His hair is cut very short, and so, by the by, is his coat. I like him, as I say, but I don't love him, my dear; be sure of that. And if I know myself—but we are not supposed to know ourselves, are we?—I never shall love him, as I understand love.

'What more news have I? Oh, I was nearly forgetting that last Saturday Bertie brought down his father, who still remains here at the Grand Hotel. Sir Algernon is quite an old man, of course, but pleasant enough. He knew poor papa very well, he tells me, and says he remembers me when I was a pretty little girl in frills with a red coral necklace, and my hair tied up with blue ribbons. I was obliged to say that I had not the slightest recollection of the old gentleman. Good-bye, dearest Julia. Write soon. Tell me what you are going to do about your winter costumes. They say that furs will be worn more than ever. Do you think I can do anything with my old seal-skin jacket?' &c.

It may be gathered that, however Adela Bellingham might look like Gretchen, she scarcely wrote as a Gretchen might be expected to write.

#### IV.

SIR ALGERNON confessed that he enjoyed himself at Beachville, and that the change had done him good. The weather was delightful. He was often to be seen upon the pier and esplanade; he even trusted himself in a small boat, and was rowed by his son about the bay. He was re-introduced to Mrs. Bellingham and her daughter, and was received by the elder lady in the most enthusiastic manner. He spoke, perhaps, rather more affectionately than he really felt, or than the occasion absolutely needed, in regard to his departed friend Jack Bellingham, and expressed the greatest interest in Jack's widow and child. He was anxious to be of any possible use to them, he said. And he hired a carriage and took the ladies some miles along the coast to see the well-known ruins of Beachville Castle and Abbey, regaling the ladies with a handsome lunch at the old Castle Hotel. Mrs. Bellingham did not spare the champagne, of which Sir Algernon made a liberal provision. Adela was a water-drinker.

And sometimes Sir Algernon walked and talked with Martha, while admitting that Mrs. Bellingham was much too young and lovely for the part; and sometimes he walked with Gretchen, protesting that no one had ever looked the part so perfectly as did Miss Adela Bellingham. He was, it may be said, a most agreeable Mephistopheles, lively and humorous, for all his weight of years and the gravity of the position at Somerset House; while no opposition was offered to Bertie Everton's performance of Faust.

'I thought you'd like the Bellinghams, sir,' said Bertie.

'It's hard to know which one ought to admire the more, Mrs. or Miss Bellingham,' observed Sir Algernon.

'Mrs. Bellingham is a very fascinating woman,' continued Bertie.

'Almost too fascinating,' agreed Sir Algernon; 'I feel rather overpowered by her charms at times, they are on so prodigious a scale, and now and then I feel almost swept away by the swift current of her conversation.'

'Yes, she might be called a brilliant talker.'

'Even blazing,' suggested Sir Algernon.

'And Adela is very sweet.'

'No doubt; and how well she looks, considering what she has undergone these many years,' mused Sir Algernon. 'She has had to listen while her mother talked.'

'One might take them to be sisters rather than mother and daughter,' said Bertie, who had not followed closely his father's last remark.

'Yes,' agreed Sir Algernon; 'sisters in a very numerous family, the first and last born, with twenty years' difference between them, and one of them very much stouter than the other.'

This conversation occurred after dinner.

'Suppose we light our cigars and take a turn upon the pier while the band plays,' proposed Sir Algernon. 'It's a lovely moonlight night.'

'And I dare say we shall meet the Bellinghams. In fact, Mrs. Bellingham said they should be on the pier this evening.'

Sir Algernon prolonged his stay at Beachville. He was not satisfied with a visit enduring only from Saturday to Monday. He took quite a little holiday, indeed: Bertie, when he could, joining his father at the sea-side.

'They make a pretty pair, our dear children, do they not, Sir Algernon?' asked Mrs. Bellingham with some exuberance of manner, as she pointed out Bertie and Adela pacing the pier together.

'Yes,' Sir Algernon answered drily. 'But I have no great

confidence in pretty pairs myself. Adam and Eve were a pretty pair, you know. But I don't know that much good came of their union. They were, perhaps, too nearly of an age.'

It was some few days after this that Sir Algernon said :

'I hope, Bertie, that I am still to understand that no engagement subsists between you and Miss Bellingham?'

'I assure you, sir, there is no such engagement.'

'It would be the height of imprudence, you know, Bertie.'

'I am not engaged to Miss Bellingham, and I am not in the least likely to be engaged to Miss Bellingham,' said Bertie hurriedly, his cheeks aflame.

'A lovers' quarrel?' suggested Sir Algernon. But Bertie remained silent. 'I do hope you won't do anything imprudent. You've plenty of time before you. You can well afford to wait. Why be in a hurry? Why select a wife from this generation? Why not wait for the next? Who knows,' demanded Sir Algernon playfully, 'that it may not produce something in the way of wives infinitely more desirable than we have any sort of experience or conception of?' Bertie laughed. But he seemed somewhat ill at ease.

Meantime, certain conversations had passed between Mrs. Bellingham and her daughter. In the seclusion of their sea-side lodgings, the ladies were apt to address each other with a sort of acrimonious frankness. The ceremony of politeness was completely waived between them.

'I want to know, Adela, exactly what you mean to do about Bertie Everton,' said Mrs. Bellingham.

'Bertie Everton is nothing to me.'

'Don't be foolish, Adela. Upon the slightest hint, Bertie will make you an offer.'

'I shall certainly not give him that hint.'

'And if, without waiting for that, he makes his offer?'

'I shall decline it.'

'Do you mean to be an old maid, Adela?'

'I intend to please myself.'

'And nothing I can say will alter your determination?'

'Nothing, mamma.'

'You are an obstinate and foolish girl.'

'It may be so, mamma,' said Adela indifferently, and she occupied herself with the numerous buttons of her glove.

They met again some hours later. Mrs. Bellingham was evidently flushed and excited. She advanced to Adela and embraced her effusively. 'I've news for you, my child. Very important news. Will you guess what has happened?'

'I would rather not guess,' said Adela calmly.

'I can hide nothing from you, my dear child. I cannot keep my happiness to myself. Bertie Everton has asked me to be his wife.'

'You, mamma? And you have consented?'

'Yes; it was weak of me, perhaps. Reluctantly I consented. Indeed, my poor Bertie would not be refused.'

'To think of your marrying a boy like that, mamma! I would not have believed it of you!'

'Don't call him a boy, Adela. Try and be more respectful and sympathetic. But of course you can't understand my sentiments: how helpless I feel myself at times; how wretchedly dependent and dejected; how much in need of the support and solace of a strong arm, of a stout heart. The solitary, bereaved, afflicted life I have so long led has been almost too much for me. I shall now have some one to lean upon, at any rate. My own Bertie!'

'Nonsense, mamma.'

'Can't you offer me a word of congratulation, Adela?' asked Mrs. Bellingham.

'No, mamma, I really cannot—not yet, at any rate.'

There was silence for some minutes. It was broken at last by Adela.

'Perhaps I may as well tell you now, mamma, what I had designed to withhold for a little while. You have set me an example in the way of candour which I think it expedient to follow.' Her tones were just a little tremulous; she was engaged, the while she spoke, in drawing off her long close-fitting *mousquetaire* glove. 'Sir Algernon Everton has offered me his hand. I have accepted his offer. I have promised, indeed, to become his wife before the year is out.'

'Is this true, Adela?'

By way of answer, Adela stretched forth her white, cool plump hand. Upon one of the fingers—the one generally known as the 'engaged' finger—there glistened a very valuable ring—a half-hoop of superb diamonds.

'My own darling! God bless you! This is indeed happiness,' cried Mrs. Bellingham as she printed a kiss upon her daughter's pale smooth brow.

'And you will really be Lady Everton!' cried the mother; then she added in rather a changed tone, 'while I must content myself with being plain Mrs. Bertie Everton. Well, well, it is a mother's duty to sacrifice herself for her child.' The remark was not particularly relevant.

Mrs. Bellingham sighed. She was contemplating a new ring

she had received as a love-token from her affianced husband. Of course, compared with Sir Algernon's, Bertie's ring was but an inferior article of jewelry. Still, it was the best Bertie could afford to give until his next quarter's salary became payable.

## V.

HERE is a further extract from the correspondence of Miss Adela Bellingham with Miss Julia Silverlock :—

‘Many thanks, dearest Julia, for your kind congratulations. I think I have a reasonable prospect of happiness. No one has ever been so kind to me as Sir Algernon is. That I love him as the heroes and heroines of fiction and poetry are supposed to love each other I do not pretend to say. But I do assure you, I entertain for him the sincerest regard and respect. And surely it's something to be able to regard and respect a man. I think there are very few men who deserve so much of us. Sir A. is of course very much older than I am. But if I do not object to that disparity, as the world calls it, I do not think that anybody need. And, my dear, you don't know what a comfort there is in talking to a man at once so thoroughly sensible, and agreeable, and good, and kind as Sir A. is. He has been so generous in the way of presents! Such a bracelet! Such a dressing-case! with gold tops to all the bottles. And you should see the Brussels lace handkerchiefs he has given me. Mamma is bent upon being amiable. She is profuse in her congratulations, and cloaks in that way her real chagrin. She had intended, I think, at the outset to secure Sir Algernon for herself. Failing him, she fell back upon Bertie. *There is disparity, if you like!* What could the boy be thinking about? What can he see in mamma to be so completely her enslaved admirer? Of course, she led him on shamefully—did all she could to secure him. I saw what was going on, but it was not for me to say a word in the way of interference. I will own to you that I was rather piqued at Bertie's fondness for mamma, because I know that he began with liking me best. But he was hardly a free agent in the matter. She made such bids for his love. Almost she advanced upon him with the “stand and deliver” of a highwayman. Poor boy! he yielded without a struggle. Indeed, I cannot doubt that he has conceived an extraordinary affection for mamma. He is quite infatuated about her. It is rather a disappointment to her to find that their means will be very limited. Bertie cannot touch his mother's money, it appears, until after his father's death. And there is no reason why Sir Algernon should not live, as I hope he may, for very many years to come.

‘Sir Algernon, naturally, is vexed at his son’s engagement—thinks it most foolish—how could he think otherwise of it?—but on my account says little enough about it. I can see, however that he does not like mamma. He is very guarded in what he says of her; he is too polite to express his opinion concerning her. And I must say he treats her with the most perfect courtesy. But at odd times there appears upon his face a look about which there can be no mistake. He does not like his son’s wife in the least.

‘The scene between Bertie and his father was rather trying. Bertie was obstinate; otherwise, as Sir Algernon says, he behaved very well. I am sure he loves his father devotedly—still, he would not give up mamma. They kept their tempers. “Bertie and I have never quarrelled,” said Sir Algernon, “and we are not going to quarrel now, though I feel he is making himself ridiculous, and me too, by this mad marriage with Mrs. Bellingham. But he tells me that he absolutely adores, that he is resolved upon marrying this lady who is old enough to be his mother—that his life will be a blank without Mrs. Bellingham. What can I do or say, therefore, but bid him depart in peace and be happy in his own way? As I said, I cannot quarrel with Bertie.”

‘Things happen curiously—do they not, Julia dear? I once, I own, thought that possibly Bertie Everton might become my husband. He is to be my stepson and my mother’s husband, instead. And my mother is to be my husband’s daughter-in-law. My husband is the father of my mother’s husband. Do you not find all this rather complicated?’

## VI.

SIR ALGERNON and Lady Everton occupy a noble mansion in Eaton Place. Bertie Everton and his wife tenant one of those small houses on the skirts of the Regent’s Park which really pertain to Camden Town. Mrs. Bertie Everton talks with pride, and yet with a certain bitterness of spirit, of her daughter’s luxuriousness, splendour, and exclusiveness in Eaton Place.

A son—a very fine boy—has been born of the union of Sir Algernon Everton and Adela Bellingham. Mrs. Bertie has presented her fond husband with a lovely little daughter.

Sir Algernon, as he sits in his easy-chair in the Turkey-carpeted room at Somerset House, sometimes pauses in the midst of his toils in connection with the finances of the nation, to consider the intricate relationship existing between these newly born infants.

## Blades the Clown.

### A CIRCUS STORY.

#### I.

SOME years ago I was travelling in Australia. One sultry day I was journeying through one of the great 'forests primæval,' when, halting at noon in a shady tangle, my party noticed signs of country life and habitations. A prettier oasis could not be conceived: there was the sound of singing birds, of fluttering wings, of running water; there was the scent of strange flowers. But what perplexed me was, that there were two horses tied to a tree—not by any means the rough, unkempt creatures seen in the Bush, but rather elegantly shaped steeds, well groomed, something after the pattern of 'park-hacks.' About the bridles and saddles there was a curious showiness which suggested some old associations of a profession. Going on a little farther, I heard the sound of voices, and came up with the riders, a lady and gentleman seated at the foot of a tree in a shady spot. He was a tall muscular man of about forty, she a *petite* creature, with a childish, half gay, half sad face—rather, these alternately—and some ten years younger. She wore a broad-leaved hat, which became her. As I drew near, they both rose, and he greeted me in an American accent; but I was looking at her steadily. At last it broke upon me. 'Surely,' I said, 'though it is now ten years ago—still, Blades the clown——'

She broke out into a silvery laugh. 'I was waiting till you found that out,' she said. 'I knew you at once; it was so many years ago, wasn't it?'

'Yes,' I said.

'They're all gone,' she added abruptly: 'poor Joe Blades, and Old Toby he went the next year, and Billy—you heard about poor Billy, of course?—went for a soldier and was killed. Only I and Jack left. Would you know Jack now? He couldn't do what he did then.'

I did remember him, though; the brilliant Hedges. He rose before me, on the last occasion, seated lightly on the quarter of his 'bare-backed' steed, himself almost as bare-backed. Yes, I recalled him perfectly.

'We're rich now,' he said; 'three shows going about, and one permanent regular home. Here we're taking a tour. Come up to the tent and see us. We are a very happy couple now, I can tell



*'Seated at the foot of a tree in a shady spot.'*





you, though it was begun disastrously. Yes, rather. Neither she nor I work at it now, but we see that the others do.'

I went with them and stayed a week. I met them afterwards in Europe. They were always friends. Here now shall be related how I originally came to know them.

## II.

THE drum had continued all through dinner banging with unabated violence, and yet to a degree muffled, as if the drum beaten were under bedclothes. A remote, fantastic idea, however possible to conceive, yet impossible to execute, save in Alice's Wonderland. A horn would wind out occasionally in emulation, also as if under blankets.

It was at an old inn in Pontefract, at the entrance of the town. The time was about nine o'clock.

'What *is* that, waiter? It has been going on all dinner.'

'Only the show, sir. Blades's circus; a poor shabby thing, sir; shouldn't be allowed.'

Yet if on a more respectable footing there would have been more noise.

'You see, sir, Blades was reared in the town, born and bred, as he tells them every night himself, and so they always let him have that field—he and his daughter; and they come regular—Joe and the old grey 'oss Toby; and they all go for old times' sake and the honour of the place.'

I went to the window and unclosed the shutters. There at the end of the field was what seemed a huge old horn stable-lantern: a dirty-looking bell-tent, in fact, lit up dimly within; outside some few pots of paraffin flared up on the ground.

'*That* a circus!' I said.

'It's big enough for what they gives, sir. There's only them selves.'

'Only themselves!' I repeated; 'but that's all there is in any other circus.'

'I mean, only old Blades, his daughter, and Billy, and the musicians.'

'Forty feeding like one,' I murmured half aloud—'an odd establishment.'

'With old Toby, the old grey.'

'The horse!'

'Yes, sir, he does it all too. But the thing is clever, uncommon clever. London gentlemen stopping here have said so again and again. Old Blades is clown, and first-rate—that is, once he

was. And the girl goes on Toby—a very handsome clever thing. Joe ring-master; but when his turn comes he's Dick Turpin and rides to York. You should see him going round as Bonyparty sitting on the rock at St. Helena, and commanding the French at Waterloo, and wearing his crownation robes.'

'All on the horse?'

'Ay, indeed; there's the wonder of it! and within five minutes I've seen that lad take off six waistcoats, one after the other, and throw 'em into the ring. One red, one flowered, one short, one long, one——'

'Curious! But why?—what did he mean?'

'As the ploughboy, o' course, sir, 'listing, and going to the wars, and becoming a general, or the Bri-gand of the Bruteshy—that's fine! You're thinking of going now, sir? They'd take it as a compliment. Indeed, they expect it like, the "Three Crowns" being so nigh. It'll comfort 'em, as some one's been putting the police on 'em; and the squire says he'll hunt 'em out as vagabonds—no better nor worse than gipsies.'

He handed me a poor, starved, attenuated bill, that seemed to have been 'set up' and printed on short commons. I read—

BLADES'S ROYAL CIRCUS.

And as the hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
Pants to the spot from whence at first she flew;  
Still did I long, my weary wanderings past,  
Here to return and die at home at last!

(Not textually quoted; but no matter.) I went on—

J. BLADES,

Original English Clown,  
Formerly Premier Comic,

OF SPAGNOLETTI'S CIRQUE MONSTER,

Begs to inform the surrounding nobility and gentry that he has opened  
HIS CIRQUE,

(This written in, in a neat female hand)—

At the Brickfield, by kind permission of Mr. Bumpus, of the 'Three Crowns,'

(This next line printed)—

Where he hopes to see his friends as before.  
The Old Attractions. The Old Variety Show.  
Old Blades the Clown, and old Toby the Performing Horse.  
No Foreigners. British to the Core.  
The lovely Miss Nelly in her varied Tricks and Acts,  
And Billy Williams, the unrivalled Delineator.

I walked across into the field. It was an old tent, dirty as a collier's sail, compounded and mysteriously attached to one small yellow van; while a bit of canvas trained over some poles did, clearly, duty as Toby's stable. Two little boys stood at the trian-

gular entrance trying to peep in. The single cornet was playing cheerfully, but in spasms, accompanied by loud encouraging 'Hups, Hups!' Then would come abrupt pauses, while an animated dialogue would commence. As I entered there was no door-keeper, no one to take the money. The scene was a small ring, lit up by another ring—of candles, hung from above. About a dozen persons were present, half boys; while some chairs did duty as the 'reserved seats.' In this dull light I could see a lovely creature in blue muslin and spangles, seated sideways on an old grey horse of the cut usually seen drawing omnibuses, who was now walking round, grunting and coughing, scant of breath, like an old gentleman after getting upstairs. And there was surely old Blades himself, the ancient clown, his hands in his pockets, who was walking round, engaged in jests upon his daughter, who, according to the rule of the ring, was affecting utter disdain. Yet, on my entrance, I noticed that the conversation flagged; all eyes wandered to me with a greater interest. Suddenly the music broke out again. The solitary cornet blasted as though it were a mail-coach entering a town. The old horse with a groan responded to a touch of the whip from Mr. Favanti, 'Ring-master,' and with much grunting broke into an amble. Then Joe Blades, the old clown, assumed a new character, and came over and took the money. He was dazzled with the shilling, double the proper fee, but he added, 'See, Mister, the reserved seats lets you behind the scenes.'

But the girl, who was now prancing round on the leather tea-tray fixed on Toby's back, had a singular air. Her figure and face were so fine and delicately shaped; her lips opened in an elegant curve, and seemed to move sensitively of themselves. She was out of tune and harmony with the place. How she could ever have been old Joe Blades's daughter was a marvel. I will not say she seemed a duke's child, or even a nobleman's, for such are often athletic, stalwart creatures. I found that I could hardly well look at her performance; as it seemed to me, a sort of shame came upon her refined face. Old Joe was wheezing round and calling out some directions to her, evidently with the view of setting her off before the stranger; but I heard her say, a little impatiently, 'I'm tired,' and the signor at once brought up Toby to a halt, and ran to help her down from the tea-tray; after which she retired 'behind the scenes.' Then Mr. Favanti, amazingly transformed in a singularly short jacket, came out as 'the Brigand of the Abruzzi,' and proceeded to lie in wait for and rob all passengers. As this performance went on, and it was of a daring kind, I confess to being more attracted by the young girl, who was peeping out all the while from behind the curtains, and

watching the brigand in his evolutions—not, it must be confessed, of a very romantic character, owing to the prosaic nature of Toby, who snorted and grunted at every movement. However, the young fellow did his work well enough, or did his best. The old clown was now beside me. In a confidential tone: ‘You see as I see. Nice pair they’ll make. And one of these days they’ll have a show, fitting like, with a tent to hold a thousand, and a train of carriages and a gilt Roman car for the band, and something else besides Toby! Lord bless you! he throws an air of the grotesk over it. Well done, Billy!’

Just at this moment a new visitor entered—a tall, athletic, fine-looking man, with a shaved Julius-Cæsar sort of face, young, or youngish, according as we consider five-and-twenty or thirty young. He had deep-set eyes, and a handsome mouth and curly hair. He did not condescend to a seat, but stood scornfully surveying the antics of the brigand, who, after dressing and undressing himself, pointing guns backward as if pursued, was now—reduced to his shirt-sleeves, and on his knees, with head bent—waiting execution. Joe Blades had crossed to the stranger for toll, but the other said something in a low voice which seemed to astonish the old clown, who, as the brigand flew by, called to him—

‘Wake up, Billy; here’s a swell!’

On which the performer, after a hurried glance, received a new life, and performed the most fantastic gymnastics, twirls, and leaps, touching up his old horse with the whip, to the latter’s astonishment. Even the pretty ‘Miss Nelly’ peeped out with eagerness to survey the stranger. He still seemed to look on with a sort of amused contempt.

At the close of the performance I asked old Blades, would he come up to the inn and have something?—I liked to hear about circus life, and ‘if the young lady would come, and the others——’

‘Billy, you mean? To be sure; and Fairy too, though she’s shy—’ he paused.

‘You mean, you’ll give us something to drink?’ he added nervously.

‘Certainly; with something to eat, if you’ll come to supper.’

### III.

ACCORDINGLY they came, in about half-an-hour, somewhat to the astonishment of the waiter. Billy proved, out of his disguise, to be an honest-looking fellow, but very short for the profession, which regards with respect fine men only. Miss Nelly appeared a girlish little creature, with shy admiring eyes, and a smile

that was ready at any moment. As her father said, 'brought up among clowns and 'osses, it was wonderful.'

It was a pleasant meal, and amusing. Soon the shyness of the girl wore off; her eyes brightened as certain delicacies made their appearance; she began, as I might call it, to prattle on about 'the profession,' telling stories of old Toby, 'who was now in bed,' and who was getting 'so lazy.'

Billy had his eyes fixed on her as she talked, and old Blades, now grown quite friendly and familiar, nudged me now and then, once declaring that she could 'work Billy like a managed 'oss'—I presumed, he meant of the *manège*.

Old Blades, I soon saw, had a fatal weakness, which declared itself almost at once, in spite of warnings and frowns from his child; who, in a pretty way, asked leave to take his liquors under her special charge, to his serious annoyance. It was evident, indeed, that he was a little upset, and I saw the troubles gathering plainly on that pretty face—an anxiety or grief, as if in pain. At last she rose, and said, with surprising firmness, 'Now, Blades, you must have no more, and we'll take you home.' On which the old clown grew angry, and with a lowering brow asked, 'What she were afraid of? Was he a child at school, that he was to be spoken to like that, and by his own child too? *He, the oldest clown in the service!* And before as noble-minded a gent as ever smelt sawdust—liberal-'arted, that would stand to a man for his benefit,' &c.

But all the while Miss Nelly was getting on her things in a business-like fashion, and Billy helping. When she had fixed her hat on—which she did, as she seemed to do everything, with an earnest vehemence—she said:

'Now, you just come, daddy Blades, and say "good-night."'

Then to me, with almost a lady's grace:

'You have been so kind to us!—thank you so much Good-night.'

As they were turning to go out of the coffee-room, the doorway was suddenly filled with the handsome, commanding figure that had visited the show. He stood for a moment; and certainly a finer, handsomer specimen of stalwart youth could not be conceived. He was over six feet high, graceful and even elegant in make: there was something of the Hercules; his dress even was becoming; yet the same instinct helped all the party to recognise that he was 'professional.'

'Bless you!' said old Blades, 'it's you that came in at the show; I saw you!'

'And a capital show,' he said, 'considering the materials. You do as much with them as man or—' and he paused for an instant

as he looked at Nelly—‘or this young lady can do. Don’t go—don’t break up; I was coming to look for you and tell you so.’

Miss Nelly was gazing with a shy awe at the handsome stranger, who spoke with a slight American accent.

‘Yes, sit down for a moment, for a few minutes, till I tell you who I am, and till I hear about you. Here! champagne! we must all drink. And you, sir’ (to me), ‘I must tell you,’ said he, ‘I am Hedges—“Mr. J. G. HEDGES,” as you see me displayed; the great bare-backed rider. My portrait is done on a scale that no one else’s ever has been or could be—eight feet high sometimes, with the horse flying round, and in all the colours of the rainbow—and yet not like, after all. Hard, isn’t it?’

Nelly laughed; Billy did not.

‘And you’re Hedges?’ said old Blades, now sobered by awe and admiration. ‘Bless you! we’ve heard of you driving the team of six, and your black bare-backed steed Pegasus. We know you as well as if we’d been in the same house with you. When and where do you open?’

‘They’ll be here by daybreak, or before. The great tent is on its road. Ah! that’s a caravan, if you like! A hundred horses, twenty gilt cars, thirty yellow vans, six clowns, and a hundred and ten men and women all told.’

Old Blades opened his eyes, but was too experienced a professional to do more. Bless you, he knew all that long ago.

Billy gasped with genuine astonishment.

‘And where are you going to pitch?’ asked old Blades.

The other paused, then smiled. ‘Well, I don’t like to tell you; but, you see, no other field is to be got this way.’

‘What!’ said Blades, ‘ride over me? Ah, isn’t that like the world! you swells won’t let a poor man live. For shame of yourselves, snatching the bit from our mouths!’

‘Come, don’t say that; you know you were going to move.’

‘It’s shabby, it’s mean and treacherous. I’m ashamed to have touched your drink.’

‘Nonsense, father!’ said Nelly. ‘There was no other place for them to go.’

Old Blades glared at her (the drink was gaining again), but said nothing.

‘It’s nonsense,’ said Mr. Hedges. ‘What’s more, you must come and see us to-morrow night when we open. I have a set of new feats on Borodino, the coal-black steed of the Ranches, who is neither coal-black nor ever saw the Ranches. I’ll astonish them; I mean to be the premier bare-backed rider of the world before the week is out.’

Nelly looked at him with fresh and frank admiration. 'Oh, we'll go and see Mr. Hedges; of course we shall, daddy.'

'Of course you will,' he said bitterly. 'You don't care how I am degraded: I, that was premier clown in Spagnoletti's for five-and-twenty year!'

'Come, cheer up,' said Mr. Hedges; 'you may be again, one of these days: Why, this 'ere Miss Nelly only wants the opening to make a brilliant success. It's not in a place like yours she'll ever be known. No, no,' he added, turning to her, 'you should be in the grand *Cirque Monster*. A splendid band in the gallery over the door where the horses come in. The sloping sides of the amphitheatre packed and black with applauding masses. The curtain is pulled aside, and you enter; the Arabian steed waits, you are on him in an instant, the music brays out, and you fly round. The rings of flaring gas overhead seem to race with you. Quicker and more headlong the pace, the ring-master cracks his whip, and has to walk faster and faster to keep up with you, the eyes of the horse flame fire, his tail flies in the air straight as a whip, his feet stretched straight also; the excitement gathers; you seem to whirl rather than ride: you pass in a second; a lighted stick flourished round in rings could not be faster. At last, amid a roar, the speed slackens, you leap off to the ground, and are greeted with shouts of applause and delight. Who would exchange with a prime minister after his most successful speech then!'

It was something to watch Nelly as she hung upon the speaker's words. She caught his enthusiasm, and exclaimed: 'Oh, that I could be that!'

'And you shall be,' said Mr. Hedges. 'I am king yonder, and what I propose they do. Don't they call me "the Lion Bare-backed Rider," whatever that means?—ha, ha! What can you do on old Toby?—no, you must have a chance.'

The girl gave him a grateful worshipping look, then said 'good-night.' The three departed awe-stricken, and under the fascination, as it were, of Mr. Hedges' eloquence.

He and I remained sitting up for a long time, during which he told me a good deal of his life. As I gathered, he was of good family, had been led by an extraordinary passion for horses to follow this profession. He spoke with enthusiasm of the young girl. 'I can see,' he said, 'that oaf aspires to her. It would be throwing her away. She will be a queen of the circus. She has grace, spirit, everything. I shall put her in the way, before I leave England.'



## IV.

ON the next morning, as I looked out, I witnessed the triumphant rise of the MAMMOTH CIRCUS. It had grown up mushroom-like in the night. The large field was covered with the vast tent, and had become, with waggons and figures and horses, a sort of encampment. There was a noise of shouting, and a hum of voices. That night it was lit up like an illuminated balloon, through whose folds came the muffled sounds of the inspiring music. The whole town was pouring in to see the great show. Within it was an enormous amphitheatre rising to the roof. When I entered there were two 'Shakespearean' clowns enlivening the audience with 'their chaste sallies,' though I confess there was nothing very Shakespearean—nor, for that matter, was 'chasteness' the term that might be most fitly applied. As I looked round the eager audience and the rows of delighted faces, I soon noted those of the absorbed Nelly, of old Blades, and of the worthy Billy, the only one in the crowd that displayed neither eagerness nor interest. In fact, he looked wan and anxious.

Suddenly there came prancing in a noble strongly built black horse, with a snowy white bridle and belt, and immediately after him Mr. Hedges, the great Star Rider. (I like that name.) A fine and really noble figure he appeared in that somewhat trying costume. He seemed like one of the gods out of the Vatican Museum. Then began his performance. With a light bound he was standing on the 'bare-backed steed,' drooping inwards to the centre, as the fashion of such folk is. What wonders he performed—leaping down into the sawdust and leaping up lightly again, now standing with one foot on the creature's neck, the other on his flank, now crouching, now defiant, now seated airily on the horse's quarters!

Meanwhile, it was a painful duty to have to announce that Mr. J. G. Hedges would take his farewell benefit to-morrow night, before repairing to those far-off shores whither he would be followed by their hearty God-speed. This was received with bursts of applause, as though it were a piece of good news. But it only meant approval of the sentiment. But I noted there was one grave, almost sad face amongst that vast crowd—Nelly's.

'Let him go; that's the place for him,' said old Blades, who had mysteriously become hostile. 'He ain't not got the style for the town; eh, Billy, my man?'

Billy was more just, and shook his head dismally.

'You can't deny it,' he said, 'it's fine riding—the finest you and I have seen. I'll never touch him,' he added (*i.e.* approach his skill). It sounded strange, even to Nelly, who gave a little start.

But when a cloud of clowns came out, and standing on the sides of the circus held up paper hoops, and thin gaily striped broadsheets, how magnificent and daring were his leaps! He flew over and through everything. Then they were set on fire, and the Bare-backed Rider performed yet bolder marvels. Then ribbons were stretched out, held by several of the '*side-splitting sons of Momus*'—so the clowns were styled. Finally, we saw him at the close of his 'daring act' standing lightly on the horse's flank, leaping off and on as the creature flew; and, bounding on to the sawdust, after a frantic circuit, he bowed gracefully and was gone.

I noted Nelly's face as all this went on; it was like one wrapt in spiritual ecstasy. Old Blades the clown was moody. Bless you, it was nothing to what he'd seen in old Ducrow's days—when Macdonnell the American rider was over here. As for Billy, he was silent, looking vacantly in the sawdust, which perhaps he fancied, stirred by the hoofs of the flying steed, had covered up his hopes. There were many other shows: eight ladies in hussar uniform dancing a quadrille; the celebrated 'globe-walker,' and the like. Then the ring-master came out to make a speech. He thanked them for their cordial and generous support, especially on the hearty reception of Mr. J. G. Hedges, the Great Mammoth Rider, who would carry to his grave the recollection of that evening's triumph. Mr. J. G. Hedges, as they all knew, was shortly leaving them to fulfil an important engagement through all the Australian towns. He was a great loss, but they had secured others to fill his place—another great star rider, whose name alone it was sufficient to mention.

That night at the hotel, at about midnight, I saw Mr. Hedges enjoying his supper. After receiving some compliments in a modest, off-hand way, he said:

'By the way, I asked old Blades and his family to supper here, but he'll have nothing to do with me; odd, isn't it?' and he laughed. 'Then I spoke this morning to the proprietors about *her*—this girl, you know. They were willing on my recommendation. Not that it's exactly the school I'd choose for a young girl. They give good terms—and better, to please me. Well, old Blades would have none of it.'

'But she?'

'Enchanted. Such an opening, too, instead of careering round on old Toby. Can't be helped. You can't aid people that won't be aided. So there it must lie, and I'll take my way to the Antipodes. Good-night.'

There was something curious in his manner, and it seemed to

me that this resignation was affected. I myself was leaving in the morning. I sat till past midnight reading the London papers, and as I rose to go to bed, I went over to the window to look with some curiosity at the little settlement opposite, for there was a strange attraction in that curious family. It seemed to me they were astir still, for a light was flitting about. I thought what would be the fate of Nelly in either case—not hopeful, whether she remained with her father and old Toby or joined the more dazzling troupe. Suddenly I heard a sharp cry, the door of the tent opened, and a white figure flew out and rushed towards the hotel. I threw open the window; in a moment she was below it.

‘Oh, help us; save us, sir! Do come down. He is killing us; he will kill himself.’

In a moment I was beside her.

‘Who—your father?’

‘Yes, yes. That terrible drink—it is on him—now. He is mad. I knew it was at hand. Billy cannot restrain him.’

We hurried over to the tent, where indeed old Blades was raging as she had described it. His old enemy, the drink, had been at work, and he was, besides, uttering strange, wild imprecations on the rival Horsemanship, as he considered, of Mr. Hedges, his particular enemy. When he saw me, he somewhat cooled.

‘They want to destroy me,’ he said, ‘among them; she has joined with the rest against me and poor old Toby. But mind ye this: ye can’t get rid of the old horse without getting rid of me. Bare-backed rider, indeed!’ This he added with the bitterest contempt.

At last he was soothed and became quiet, and I went away to the hotel.

On the next day I thought I would remain in the place a little longer. All the walls, alive and dead, were in a perfect conflagration of posters, flaming out, as in letters of fiery coals, that ‘HEDGES the Great Star Rider,’ would take his final farewell benefit that night. Some new equestrian cartoons portraying him as maintaining two sylphs, one on each knee, without apparent effort, as he flew round on his bare-backed steed, caused universal attraction, and crowds gathered to stare. I began myself to feel a secret drawing towards the thing, and determined to go. I thought of the tent and circus opposite, now virtually demolished by the overwhelming competition of the ‘CIRQUE MONSTER.’ It was all quiet now, but they had not broken up to go on their way. Towards evening the lantern was again lit up, and the waiter, coming in, said mysteriously: ‘Poor old Blades is at it again. Been at it

all day. That poor child, it's a sore trial for her. He's as dangerous as a lunatic when he gets into those fits.'

I saw Billy crossing hurriedly, and I beckoned to him.

'Such a day as we had with him!' he said. 'I don't know what will become of us all.'

'And Nelly?'

'He seems to hate her, and accuses her of plotting against him. But we start to-morrow morning. Once we are on the road, all will be well.'

That night I went to the circus, and saw Mr. Hedges' farewell performance. It was very brilliant and successful, though he did not perform all the muscular wonders depicted on the walls. I came home.

Next morning—a bright one—the friendly waiter came up to my room somewhat excited.

'Oh, did you hear the news, sir? Poor Billy's below to tell you.'

'What?' I said.

'She's gone—gone off, sir!—the girl and Hedges the horse-riding man!'

I heard the whole story from the deserted swain. Old Blades had gone 'on the drink' all the day, and as night came on seemed to be seized with a sort of rage because they would not give him more drink, for he had gone up the town, leading old Toby, and had sold him on the spot to a knacker, who within an hour had put him to death. With some of the money he began to drink at the various taverns. When Nelly discovered all this, her grief for the poor old horse was excessive. And when he came in she uttered the most bitter reproaches. 'Then,' said Billy, covering his face, 'he gave her a blow, and bade her hold her tongue—not the first time: on which she flew away out of the house—and—I have never seen her since, and never shall again!'

Poor Billy never did see her again. Nor old Blades. A few weeks later she was flying round a vast 'Cirque Monster,' erected at Leeds or Manchester, bounding through papers, as lovely *VIOLANTE* or some such name, to a roar of amphitheatre applause. Poor Toby! Poor old Blades! Poor Billy! What were they, in that whirling blaze of gas-jets, to the braying of brass, the neighing of steeds, the shouts! She was known in private life as the beautiful Mrs. Hedges, wife of the great Star Rider, and herself a star rider too.

And it was thus that I met them in Australia.

PERCY FITZGERALD.

## Mildred Blaquairst.

### CHAPTER I.

THE materials upon which the following singular narrative is founded are gathered from the papers of the late Reverend Mark Underwood, Vicar of — in the county of Kent, and father of the heroine of the story. Whether or not the strange psychological problem it presents was merely the result of a series of remarkable coincidences acting upon a morbidly excited brain must be left to the individual judgment of our readers.

Somewhere between thirty and forty years ago the sensational topic of the day was the murder of a rising young barrister, Mr. Arthur Blaquairst, at his house at Highgate; so daring, so mysterious a crime had not been perpetrated within living memory. A reward of one hundred pounds was offered by the Government for the capture of the murderer, or for any information that might lead to his apprehension; to which the widow added a further sum of two hundred; but nothing came of it, and within a few months the story began to fade out of the public mind, and to lose its interest for every person, save one.

Let us begin with the personal narrative of Mildred Blaquairst, the widow:

I had been married only eleven months and five days, she writes, when the terrible event occurred. The 23rd of June 185— had been intensely hot; there was a heavy electrical atmosphere, and towards evening I began to suffer from an extreme depression and a dull, nervous headache. After dinner my husband sat down to work. I can remember feeling it quite a relief when the monotonous gloom at length faded into twilight, and the lamp was brought in. I took up a book and tried to read, but presently I grew so drowsy that I could scarcely keep my eyes open. Arthur, observing this, urged me to go to bed. I should have gladly preferred dozing in my easy chair, but kind and indulgent as he was usually, I never disobeyed him when he set his mind upon any point, however trifling.

‘I may be several hours yet over this brief,’ he said, ‘for it is a very complicated case, and I could not think of you remaining up so long, sleepy as you are.’

Finding that he was bent upon my going, I rose reluctantly, put my arms round his neck, kissed him, and begged him not to sit up longer than he could possibly help.

Before leaving the room I went to the window, which opened upon the garden, and looked out upon the night. Our grounds sloped downwards towards the valley traversed by Milfield Lane. It was very dark for the time of year, but over the blackness of Caen Wood, which clothed the opposite hill, behind which the sun had set, there was still a dull line of light. There was a breathless stillness in the air, a clearness beneath the black pall that was drawn over the heavens, and a pungent odour from the flowers and shrubs that seemed to indicate a coming storm. The landscape, with its gentle wooded slopes and green fields, among which flashed glimpses of gleaming waters, so charming under a bright blue sky, now looked so gloomy and ghostly that I turned away from it with a shiver, to contemplate for an instant the more cheerful sight within doors.

Ours was an old-fashioned house, and the low ceiling and dark panelled walls, partly lined with grave-looking, leather-bound law books, upon which the shaded lamp shed but a dim light, had a sombre appearance even after the darkness without. Only upon the table, at which Arthur was writing with his back to the window, was there a circle of brightness.

‘Shall I close the window, dear?’ I asked.

‘Not unless you would find me dead of asphyxia to-morrow morning,’ he replied, smiling; ‘I can scarcely breathe as it is.’

‘It is very close,’ I said, still lingering.

‘You will find it cooler up-stairs,’ he answered; ‘here the trees and shrubs intercept what little air there is. Now go to bed, darling, for you are only interrupting me.’

I kissed him once more, opened the door, and stood upon the threshold, I felt so strangely loath to go; until he looked up quite irritably, although he did not speak, and I could perceive that he was vexed with me.

Upon entering my bedroom, I dismissed my maid and sat down at the open window without lighting my candles. The aspect was different from that of the apartment I had just quitted—it looked out upon a grove of trees, and towards the church and the town. It was a pleasant change from the desolate loneliness that reigned at the back of the house; people were moving about the road beneath, I could hear them talking; there were gas lamps to be seen, the rumble of wheels could be heard, and far away the darkness was broken by the lights of the great city.

The comparative cheerfulness of the scene, the sense of life about me, wrought an almost instantaneous effect; both the depression and the drowsiness passed off within a few moments, and with

them all inclination to go to bed. If I had only come up here for a few minutes an hour ago, I thought, my heavy eyelids and jaded looks would not have excited Arthur's attention, and I should now be sitting with him comfortably reading a book.

But I dared not interrupt him by returning; so after hearing the clock of Highgate Church strike eleven, in very ill-humour with myself, I began to undress, resolving, as a kind of self-inflicted punishment, to keep awake until he came to bed. But soon after I had laid my head upon the pillow sleepiness stole over me, and in spite of my resolution I did not hear the clock strike midnight.

As far as I know, my sleep was calm and dreamless, but it passed off quite suddenly, and I found myself all in a moment wide awake. It was still dark, and I was still alone. My impression was that I had not slept many minutes, but after lying quiet for a little while I rose and looked at my watch, by the night-light that I had left burning, and found to my astonishment that it wanted but a few minutes to two. I had slept nearly three hours. And Arthur was still at work.

I opened the bedroom door to go down to him; but paused irresolutely, fearing that he would scold me. I turned back into my room, reclosed the door, and went to the window, which was still open. All without was silent as death, until I heard the distant tramp of the policeman on his beat, and the clock strike two. During my slumber the sky had cleared, and the air had become fresh, almost chilly. Slipping on a dressing-gown, I sat down and looked out upon the trees, until their forms, beginning to grow more distinct against the horizon, told me that day had dawned.

But it brought with it little boding of the horror it was ushering in for me, unless to such an influence I must ascribe the intense longing with which I listened for his footsteps, until the tension became unendurable, and I started up determined to wait no longer, however angry he might be.

I opened the door, and the staircase yawned like a black gulf before me; I paused, still irresolute—should I or should I not venture? I could hear my heart throbbing against my side. I felt angry with myself. Why this fear of an irritable look, an impatient word?—for was not that the worst I had to fear?

Swiftly I descended the dark staircase, reached the hall, and groped my way along the passage which led to the library, guided by the pencil of light which streamed beneath the door. When my hand was upon the lock my courage almost failed me; but after a

second's pause I turned it and opened the door, expecting to see a grave, perhaps an angry face, uplifted to meet mine.

The room was just as I had left it, the shaded lamp still cast a bright circle of light upon the table and upon the papers with which it was strewn—but Arthur was not there. I had so prepared myself for a frown and a scolding, that I stood for a moment leaning upon the handle of the door quite bewildered. But the next instant an awful dread fell upon me.

'He has only gone into the garden to breathe the fresh air before he comes to bed,' I thought, half aloud. But I knew that I was lying to myself, and that I had no belief in any such explanation of his absence.

I stood staring through the open window. The dawn had as yet scarcely spread to the west, which was still clouded, and the trees and shrubs were still but darker shadows upon the dark background. To have heard even a leaf rustle would have been a relief to that awful stillness. It never occurred to me to call the servants; my terror had nothing to do with myself, it was only for him—for my husband.

Creeping stealthily across the room, as though I feared to disturb some one's slumber, I advanced to the window and peered out with strained eyeballs, in shuddering expectation that some ghastly object would meet my sight; but I saw nothing except the motionless laurels and laurestinums. I must have stood thus in a half stupor of terror for some minutes, until the faint twitter of an early bird startled me, for when I raised my eyes skywards the clouds had faded out of the west, and the grey cold light from the east had stolen to the edge of Caen Wood.

I advanced a step and stood upon the gravel, and as I did so I saw something black lying upon the path close to the wall of the house. I knew what it was, even before I was on my knees beside it.

I did not faint. I summoned the servants, although I have no recollection of doing so; they tell me that I was quite calm, but my memory has only broken and confused images of this time. He was quite dead when I found him, but the doctor said that life could not have been long extinct. If I had yielded to my impulse when I first rose, who knows but that I might have been in time to save him! Death had been caused by a blow upon the right temple, inflicted by some blunt instrument. His right hand was so firmly clenched that they had some difficulty in opening it. When they did so they found in it some short light hair, pulled out by the roots, that seemed a portion of a man's beard or whiskers, and which I have now in my possession. At some



distance off they discovered half of a cameo, a head of *Minerva*, which seemed to have fallen from a pin or a ring; these were the only vestiges the assassin left behind.

Nothing was removed from the room—no article was missing, the body was not rifled even of its watch and chain. How did the murderer gain admission? we had no back entrance, and the garden was surrounded on every side by the grounds of our neighbours; it had high walls, and was difficult of access, as the house was nearly the centre of a row, and could be reached from the back only after surmounting seven or eight other walls. The doors and windows were found to be fastened just as the butler had left them upon going to bed; no lock was forced, and there was not the slightest trace to show how the murderer had effected an entrance.

Had my poor darling been lured into the garden by some sound, or had he gone thither to seek relief from the hot atmosphere of his room, and there encountered the assassin? Again, what was the motive of the crime? Not robbery. Revenge? I was not aware that he had an enemy upon the face of the earth.

But I have an intense conviction that the mystery will be cleared up some day; were I to lose that faith, I should lose faith in the justice of Providence. The remainder of my life, long or short, I devote to fathoming the mystery of his death.

## CHAPTER II.

THE concluding words of this record were frequently upon Mildred's lips, but people smiled, and said that when the shock which had wrecked her young life should be weakened by time, her resolution would give way, and she would form some new attachment. When two years, however, had nearly elapsed and her mode of life was still unchanged, her seclusion still so rigid that she would receive only her nearest relations or most intimate friends, when it was known that she never quitted the house except to visit her husband's grave, the world began to regard her as the victim of a monomania, to condemn her morbid self-sacrifice, and regard it as pitiful that so charming a creature should be lost to society.

At first she had expressed an intention of remaining in the house in which the crime had been committed, but, upon this point at least, she had yielded to the advice of her friends, and had taken apartments in the neighbourhood. Her father, who resided about fifty miles from London, entreated her to return home, but in vain.

There was nothing, however, pronounced or ostentatious in her

grief; those who visited her found her always employed either in reading or needlework; she never spoke of her loss, unless her visitor had the bad taste to refer to the subject, and then she would dismiss it in a few words that told how painful it was to her. No one ever saw a tear upon her cheek, or heard a sigh escape from her lips; she was grave, smileless, self-contained, but never lachrymose.

She had one curious habit, which was known only to her maid; every evening at dusk in all weathers, summer or winter, she would go out closely veiled and alone; she was usually absent about a couple of hours, and when she returned it was with a weary and dejected look. One night the maid, unable any longer to restrain the curiosity of her kind, followed her. She made straight for the house in which the murder had been committed, and which had remained untenanted ever since, unlocked the door and entered. Considerably more than an hour passed, during which the woman remained on watch, before she again issued forth, then for a few minutes she walked up and down within sight of the house, after which she slowly retraced her steps homewards. Curious to know if this were always the way in which she passed those two hours of the evening, the maid repeated her espionage several times, at intervals, and found that her mistress's movements were always precisely the same.

On the last of these occasions Mildred, it would seem, walked faster than usual, for she overtook the woman before she reached home.

'Where have you been Martha?' she inquired sharply.

Taken so suddenly Martha stammered, and was unable to find a reply.

'You have been dogging me—do not deny it, for you know I hate a lie.'

Understanding her mistress's temper, Martha at once confessed the truth.

Mildred made no comment at the time, but when she was preparing for bed she quite startled the woman by suddenly resuming the subject.

'Since you have discovered so far, Martha,' she said, 'I may as well, to avoid misinterpretation, explain the motive of my nightly visits to that house. I have heard and read that some strange, inexplicable impulse will always sooner or later draw back the criminal to the scene of his crime. He would scarcely come in the broad daylight, for fear an accident might draw attention upon him, and the terrors of conscience would scarcely allow him to choose the late hours of the night. The time I have taken for my watch, just in the twilight and the early darkness, is the most

likely for such a visit ; at least, such is the theory I have formed, and I have the most profound faith in it. He will come some evening, and I shall see him and recognise him.' And for an instant the white face, always so emotionless and impassive, brightened into life again, and the black eyes flashed with all their old fire.

From that hour Martha had very strong doubts about her mistress's sanity, but being a prudent person and having a very good place she kept her knowledge and her ideas to herself.

When Mildred paid her nightly visit to the house, the first thing she did was to walk into the garden and contemplate the spot where the body had been found ; after remaining there for a few minutes she would enter the library, which, by her orders, had been left precisely in the same condition as it was on the fatal night, light the lamp, seat herself in the chair she had then occupied, and call up to her imagination the whole scene, until she almost fancied she could see her dead husband seated at the table, bending over his papers, as when last her eyes had fallen upon him living. After remaining thus for about half an hour she would ascend the stairs to her old bedroom, and sit at the window, keenly observing every passer-by.

Each evening she went hopeful that something would come of her vigil ; each night she came away dejected and disappointed, but resolute as ever.

'The intensity of my will must draw him hither sooner or later, though he be at the antipodes,' was her nightly refrain.

It was the second anniversary of her husband's death. It had been raining, a steady downpour, since early morning ; and when she entered the garden, the air was damp and cold as that of early April ; a heavy mist nearly obscured the valley beneath ; the soddened paths yielded beneath her tread, and the dripping shrubs covered her cloak with water as she passed among them. When she entered the library she felt so chilly that she shut the window, and even the mild warmth diffused by the lamp seemed grateful to her. It was many a day since she had felt so strangely nervous and excited as she did on this night, for custom will rob the most exalted or terrible actions of their sublimity, and her vigils had become of late but as a portion of her day's occupation. 'Something will happen to night,' she said to herself, 'and what night could be so appropriate for his coming as this ?'

No person who had heard her speak such words or had seen the wild look in her black eyes, that gleamed so weirdly out of her dead white face, would have believed in her sanity.

‘Oh that I could conjure up his dear spirit before me!’ she exclaimed, as she dropped into her chair.

Gradually the sombre grey light without deepened into darkness, and the trees and shrubs became more and more blurred, until they wholly mingled with the blackness of the night, and the utter silence was broken only by the monotonous drip, drip, of the rain drops.

Suddenly the vacant chair upon which her eyes were fixed became indistinct, as though there was something between it and her vision—a vapour or smoke; and as, with an ineffable feeling of terror, she gazed on the appearance, it gradually took form and assumed the figure of her dead husband; he seemed to be sitting rigidly erect, and his face, of an unearthly pallor, and wearing an expression of intense sadness and reproach, was turned towards her.

All of a moment, she knew not why, her fascinated eyes were distracted to the window, and there, pressed against the glass, was a sinister famine-pinched visage, with shaggy red hair and bristly red beard, staring into the room; at the same moment the vision in the chair vanished, and with a cry of ‘It is Arthur’s murderer!’ she sprang to her feet and made for the window. But the face was gone; and as she stood holding on to the frame to prevent herself from falling, and intently listening, no sound of retreating footsteps fell upon her ear.

In less time than it will take to read the last sentence she was rushing wildly among the garden paths, and shrieking for help, until her feet becoming entangled among some overgrown weeds and brambles, she was precipitated with great violence to the earth.

There she lay stunned; but after a time she became half conscious of some one raising her head, and then of being borne along in some one’s arms. When she opened her eyes she found herself stretched upon the couch in the library, with a man kneeling beside her chafing her hands and gazing fixedly upon her. Still under the influence of the double vision that she believed she had seen, she started up and looked wildly around.

‘Are you better?’ inquired a soft voice.

‘Who are you?’ she cried, shrinking back; ‘where is the man that was there,’ pointing to the window—‘my husband’s murderer?’

‘There is no one there, madam,’ replied the stranger. ‘I was in the garden of the next house, I heard a shriek, jumped over the wall, and found you lying senseless upon the ground.’

‘But there was a man here, a horrible-looking man with shaggy hair, beetle brows, and an unshaven cadaverous face; he looked in at me, and I tell you that man is my husband’s murderer, and he

has escaped me, he has escaped me,' and she wrung her hands and moaned piteously.

'A search shall be made at once and information given to the police,' replied the stranger. 'Bates!'

And a man-servant, whom Mildred had not before perceived, stepped forward.

'Call over the wall and tell some one to go for the police, then beat the bushes of the garden, and see if anyone is hiding among them.'

The man bowed without replying, and disappeared.

While he was speaking, with the light of the lamp full upon his face, Mildred was fixedly regarding him.

He was a tall, slight young man, who looked about thirty, well but not foppishly dressed, with fair hair, blue eyes, delicate features, that might have been effeminate, but for the auburn beard and moustache; it was a face full of frankness and winning charm.

In a few moments she found herself talking almost tranquilly with him.

'You are not a stranger to me, Mrs. Blaquaire,' he said; 'I was staying with my friends next door when the dreadful event happened. I have not been in London since, until within a few days back, and strange to say this is one of the first places I revisit.'

Never for a moment had he removed his intense yet respectful gaze from her face, and the dark blue eyes seemed to fascinate her with their strange indefinable expression, although she could feel her cheeks burning and every pulse throbbing violently beneath their fervid glance.

Presently, to her great relief, two policemen interrupted a *tête-à-tête* that was becoming painful. They searched the house and grounds, but without finding any one, and then departed.

The stranger, who made himself known to her as Mr. Jocelyn Hilborough, begged to be allowed to see her home, and after a little hesitation she consented.

### CHAPTER III.

THE next morning the stranger called to inform Mrs. Blaquaire that a man answering the description she had given was seen lurking about the house on the previous evening. Then they fell into conversation, and gradually Mildred found herself listening to him with an interest she had not experienced since her husband's death. He had a peculiar charm of manner, and one of those soft sympathetic voices which are as soothing to the listener as a strain of sweet music; and he seemed to enter so thoroughly into all her



*'A man was seen lurking about the house.'*



feelings, to take so deep an interest in all she said, to be so anxious to render her any assistance in his power, and yet without protestation or effusiveness, simply by a tone, a word, a look, that it became the most dangerous and insidious of flattery. When Mildred looked at the clock she saw that he had been with her an hour; it seemed that not a fourth of that time had elapsed.

After this scarcely a day passed without a call from him; at first he would make some little excuse for his visit, now it was that he had seen one of the detectives whom she had employed, then it was to inquire if she had had any news; it was impossible for the lonely, stricken woman not to feel grateful for this sympathy; and after a while she looked forward to these visits as the one bright hour of her sombre day.

There was one peculiar circumstance, although she did not notice it at the time—and that was that he never talked about himself. He had evidently travelled a great deal, seen the world in many phases, but he always, in every reminiscence, kept himself and everything relating to himself carefully in the background. His conversation was clever and amusing, yet it never jarred upon her mood, for his tone was always subdued; he never forgot for an instant that he was in a house of mourning. Had not Mildred been wrapt so completely in her idea of avenging widowhood, she might one day have asked herself to what these frequent visits and her indulgence in them were tending. Not within but from without came a glimpse of revelation.

One morning while the maid was dressing her hair, she bade her make haste, as Mr. Hilborough would soon be there. As she sat looking into the glass she caught sight of the woman's face with a curious smile upon it. The look, the meaning of which was unmistakable, gave her quite a shock and set her thinking. The result of even a slight self-examination was so unsatisfactory that early the next morning, without informing anyone of her destination, and without one word of farewell or warning to her visitor, she quitted her lodgings, and left London for an obscure watering-place upon the south coast.

Thus she contrived to escape from his presence, but not from his influence. A depression, such as she had not known since the first few weeks that followed her husband's death, fell upon her, and with it a deep yearning—for what, she dared not ask herself. In vain did she endeavour once more to concentrate her thoughts upon that purpose which she had vowed should be the sole object of her life; she had seemingly lost the mastery of her will, for another image was ever thrusting itself between the vivid one of her dead husband and the shadowy horror of his murderer.



One dull windy morning, as she was taking her monotonous walk along the esplanade, with bent head, as was her wonted mien, she suddenly raised her eyes, and there, advancing towards her, within a couple of paces, was the man she had travelled all this distance to avoid—Jocelyn Hilborough. Pretending not to recognise him, she drew her thick veil closer about her face, and, not trusting herself to take a second glance, hurried on as fast as her trembling limbs would allow her.

The next moment she would have given the world to have turned back and to have felt the warm pressure of his hand, the look of those deep fathomless eyes fixed upon her, and to have heard the soft tones of that soothing voice falling upon her ears.

She resolved to quit B—— the next morning. All that night she lay tossing in restless, waking thoughts, or in wild strange dreams, and when the morning came she was too ill to carry out her resolution—at least, she persuaded herself that such was the cause. That day she did not stir outside the door. The next morning she took her usual walk, but he was not on the esplanade. Several days passed, and she saw him no more. This was of course a great relief to her? Fain would she have persuaded herself that it was so, but no amount of self-deception could misinterpret the eager look with which she scanned every distant figure, the beating of her heart when she caught sight of any that bore the most distant resemblance to him, the sickening feeling of disappointment with which each day she returned home, and the dull despairing misery that fell upon her when the burden of all her thoughts became—‘I shall never see him again, never, never!’

One evening, about a week after that meeting, she wandered along the beach some distance beyond the limits of the usual promenade, unconscious of time or distance, monotonously repeating that burden to herself in a sort of rhythmic accompaniment to the low murmuring dash of the waves, until the night was closing in and the reflection of the rising moon began to glimmer upon the water. At last she awoke from this reverie to find herself almost alone.

As she turned to retrace her steps she came face to face with the image of her dreams. The shock was so great that for a moment she stood motionless, terror-struck; she could not believe that it was anything but an apparition conjured up by her yearning imagination, until the well-remembered voice thrilled her with the certainty that it was reality, and no phantom of the mind.

‘Are you not afraid to take these lonely walks without a companion?’ he said,

She stammered something, she knew not what, and they strolled on silently, side by side, casting faint shadows on the moonlit sands, and with the low ripple of the tide in their ears.

All of an instant she felt one of her hands clasped, and the next he was on his knees before her, pouring forth a torrent of passionate words, with the moonlight glistening in his upturned eyes.

He told her how he had loved her from the first moment his eyes had fallen upon her—that night in the garden when she had lain senseless in his arms; that feeling it was a hopeless passion, he had struggled against it with all his might, but that the more he struggled the stronger it grew. ‘I was drawn towards you,’ he said, ‘by an irresistible spell; day and night your image haunted me, tormented me; I endeavoured to escape, but it was impossible—some invisible power seemed to drag me back to you. When you left London it was a relief at first, but the next day the old irresistible fascination seized upon me. I discovered whither you had gone, and followed you. Your cold avoidance on the esplanade seemed to break the spell. I went away, but the next day the craving returned more resistlessly than ever. Mildred! you are my destiny, and I am yours; and we can never escape from one another.’

As he spoke the last word, by a sudden effort, she wrenched herself from his grasp and fled. She heard his voice calling upon her to stay, but it only gave wings to her feet, and she never relaxed her speed until she reached the crowded part of the promenade.

She saw him no more that night. But his passionate words had kindled a sympathetic flame in her own heart—a flame that had long been smouldering there—and she loved Jocelyn Hilborough with a passion she had never dreamed of—a passion as vivid as his own.

Ten days afterwards they were man and wife. They went abroad to Normandy to live; for Mildred could not face her friends, and her husband quite eagerly assented to the arrangement.

It was impossible, after the irrevocable step was taken, after the first feverish, unthinking days had sped, and something of calm had once more fallen upon her life, that Mildred’s conscience should not awake again, and smite her heavily for her falseness to the memory of the dead and to the solemn vow she had registered.

She seldom uttered these thoughts, for Jocelyn was always quick with ready and specious arguments to combat them. Had she not done all in mortal power to fulfil her vow? What more could she do? And was it right that she should give up her young life to an idea?—what purpose would it serve? Was it a noble ideal? No, it was only a morbid one. She tried to be convinced by these arguments, but she tried in vain.

And apart from these drawbacks of conscience, was she happy? Jocelyn was the most devoted of lovers; the latter word will better express his relation towards her than that of husband. He never quitted her side, voluntarily, even for an hour; he waited upon her, anticipated her every wish, watched every expression of her face that could indicate a thought, with a restless anxiety that at times almost irritated her. And yet he was so strangely reticent about himself. She knew no more of his antecedents than she had gathered from their first interview; he never spoke of his past, of his friends, or relations. And did she never question him upon such subjects? Never—directly. It was strange, such forbearance in a woman. It was not natural. There was something of pride, of pique in it—but more of an unacknowledged dread—a shrinking from knowledge, which most of us have felt in doubtful episodes of our life. Something troubled him, something he had never spoken of to her; for he often groaned and muttered in his sleep, and when she told him of it he looked scared and anxious, and questioned her closely as to what he said; but she would tell him that she could never distinguish anything beyond incoherent words that bore no meaning to her. At times the mortifying reflection crossed her mind that he doubted her assertions, and suspected her of evasion in these replies.

When they had been married about four months, a letter came from her father—it was the first time he had written since their marriage—requesting to know all about her husband, and intimating that he intended to pay them a visit during the autumn. She gave Jocelyn the letter, and as he read it she saw a troubled look come into his face. He returned it to her without a word, went to the window, and stood there for some minutes. She would have given the world to know what was passing in his thoughts; presently he came and sat beside her, and took one of her hands in both of his, and then she perceived how pale he had suddenly grown.

‘Your father wants to know all about me,’ he began abruptly. ‘Well, it is but natural. What a strange union ours is! Oh, Mildred, if it were possible that we could ever break with our past, cut it off as we would some diseased limb and be rid of it, and live pure and healthy in the future! I had some such dream when I first came here.’

‘It need not be a dream,’ she answered; ‘say but the word, and we will quit this place at once, and leave no trace behind. What is to me father or all the world compared with your happiness? I am content to remain in ignorance; what is the past to me? it cannot affect my love for you. What is the matter?—why do you turn away?’

He made no reply, but burying his face in his hands, and resting his elbows upon his knees, remained silent for some time. Mildred made no attempt to break in upon his meditations, but sat anxiously watching him.

Presently he started up. 'Yes, darling,' he said abruptly; 'we had better leave this place, as you propose.'

'Very well,' was all she replied, but her mind was troubled with vague fears and anticipations.

The next morning it was arranged that they should leave France and travel into Germany.

While Jocelyn was away in the village settling everything previous to their departure, Mildred, with a strange sinking and heavy boding at the heart, began to make her preparations, and commenced by packing some of her husband's clothes in a portmanteau. While thus engaged, something dropped out of the pocket of an old waistcoat on to the floor.

Looking to see what it was, she found at her feet a ring set with a cameo. What mysterious terror did this worthless-looking trinket have for her, that it should blanch her face and bring that look into her eyes? *It was a head of Minerva broken transversely in half.* With a low cry of 'God!' she let the ring fall to the ground again, convulsively clasped her hands, and stared blankly at it, as though it were some terrible apparition. After a moment she sank down upon a chair and murmured to herself, 'I must be mad, or dreaming!'

Then suddenly she rose up and went to a chest of drawers, and took out of one of them a jewel-case, in which she had preserved the piece of broken cameo that she had found in the garden on the night of Arthur Blaquaire's murder. Once more picking up the ring, with a hand that did not tremble, she set the fragment upon the broken space—it exactly fitted, and completed the head.

While she sat gazing upon it—numbed, dazed, fascinated—Jocelyn, having returned, came into the room.

'Good heavens!' he exclaimed, running to her; 'what is the matter? what has happened?—you look as white as a ghost?'

Without speaking, she held up the ring to him.

'What is this?' he inquired indifferently. 'Oh, an old ring that I have missed——'

There he stopped abruptly, and his face, which was flushed with excitement a moment before, suddenly blanched as white as her own.

'I found this piece of broken cameo in the garden on the morning after Mr. Blaquaire's——'

She could not complete the sentence. She waited for him to take it up ; but he stood staring at the ring without uttering a word.

‘Can you not explain this?’ she asked in an agonised voice.

‘I cannot,’ he answered slowly, avoiding her eyes.

‘Then, God help us both!’ she wailed, and for a time consciousness seemed to desert her. When she became once more sensible to surrounding objects, she was alone: he had gone without a word or a sign.

There was yet another relict.

Again she opened the jewel-case, and from a secret drawer took out a sealed paper, in which was preserved the fragment of hair that had been found in Arthur Blaquaire’s dead clasp. She broke the seal, for the first time, and took out the contents. In a locket she wore suspended by a chain round her neck was a portrait of Jocelyn and a lock of his hair ; she put the two pieces side by side: they were exactly alike in colour and quality.

The day wore on, evening and night came, and Jocelyn did not return. Before going to bed Mildred sealed up the two locks of hair in an envelope, addressed it to her husband, and left it upon the table of the sitting-room.

It was midnight before she heard him come in. Then she lay as one expecting a message of life or death. If he came to her—it is so difficult to banish hope. Two hours elapsed, then she heard the outer door softly opened and closed again. She sprang out of bed, drew aside the blind, and looked out ; it was a moonless night, or rather morning, but she could see a dim shadow glide away, until it was lost in the darkness.

He was gone—for ever. She should never look upon his face again—and the last shadow of hope went with him.

#### CHAPTER IV.

UPON the dining-room table the next morning was found a letter addressed ‘Mildred.’ It contained the *éclaircissement* of the terrible story.

‘Mildred,’ it began, ‘you have discovered my fatal secret at last, as I always anticipated you would some day. Now you shall know all, and, as I hope for mercy hereafter—if mercy can possibly be shown to such a wretch as I am—I swear to you that I shall neither set down one word that is not true, nor attempt to palliate the truth.

‘Ten years ago I held a commission in the army. I led a wild life, although perhaps not one much worse than many others of

my class. One night I lost a large sum at cards to a man whom I greatly disliked. I had not the means of paying the I O U I gave him at the table, and could not raise them. In a moment of desperation I drew a bill upon the bank of Blaquaire and Company, and forged the acceptance. By the time it fell due, I contrived to scrape together the money to take it up. On that very day the forgery was discovered, and when I went to the bank I was requested to walk into the principal's private room. I found myself confronted by Mr. Blaquaire and his youngest son, Arthur, whom I knew intimately, but who now refused to recognise me. In answer to Mr. Blaquaire's severe address I pleaded the desperate position I was placed in at the time I committed the offence, and tendered the money; he relented, and would have let me off, had not Arthur interposed and declared that he would not be a party to such an evasion of the law, and that if his father did not give me into custody, he would. I was arrested, tried, and Arthur Blaquaire appeared for the prosecution. I believe it was his first brief, and he pleaded against me with all that unscrupulous passion and invective for which he afterwards became so famous; everything that he could rip up and discover of my private life, even the follies and excesses he had shared with me, he brought up, distorted and twisted and coloured, until I was made to appear in the eyes of the judge and jury an abandoned and irreclaimable ruffian, dangerous to be loose upon society. I was condemned to five years' penal servitude.

When I came out of prison my friends disowned me, my acquaintances shunned me, my life was blasted. I did not turn burglar or pickpocket, but my mode of living was scarcely more reputable, although my manners and appearance still enabled me to move in some kind of society. Upon the racecourse I made the acquaintance of Mr. Grainger, your next-door neighbour at Highgate; he was a betting-man, and had recently lost his wife. He invited me to stay with him for a few days. The second day of my visit, while I was standing at the dining-room window, I saw Arthur Blaquaire pass, and learned that he resided in the adjacent house. To say that I hated the man who had destroyed my whole life, and passionately longed to be revenged upon him, will convey but a slight impression of the feelings aroused by this discovery.

'On the night of June 23, I was alone in the house, Grainger being away upon some business that would detain him until the next morning. The night, as you will remember, was intensely hot and oppressive. At twelve o'clock I was sitting smoking out on the verandah of the drawing-room window, which overlooked the garden; I could see a faint glow of light cast out upon

the shadowy gloom from a ground-floor window of your house. All that evening I had thought of nothing but my enemy. Probably he is at work in that room, I reflected, weaving a web for some poor devil for to-morrow! Gradually an irresistible impulse seized upon me to catch a glimpse of him. After resisting the fascination for some time—and it was a fascination which I can compare only to the feeling that draws a man towards a precipice, or to play with the bars of a wild-beast's cage—I threw away my cigar, softly descended the stairs (the servants were all in bed), opened the door leading into the garden, and by the help of a fruit-tree that grew close by swung myself over the wall; the depth being greater than I had calculated, I alighted on the other side with a loud thud. Let me stop for an instant to assure you that even then I had no fixed purpose or design. I had been drinking heavily with my host the day before, and again all that evening; the electrical condition of the atmosphere and hours of brooding over the past had unstrung my nerves, and filled me with a reckless excitement, a fierce restlessness, a humour in which everything was possible. The noise I made must have reached his ears, for I had scarcely recovered from the shock of my descent, when I saw him come out through the window, and heard him sharply demand, 'Who's there?' I remained quite still, hoping—yes, fervently hoping—that he would not discover me. But without a moment's pause, as though he had caught sight of me, he advanced to the spot where I stood. He sprang upon me, seized me with a grip of iron: "Scoundrel!" he cried, "who are you? what are you doing here?" and he tried to drag me towards the house. I was afraid he would recognise me. I knew that, whatever I might say, he would mercilessly hand me over to the police. Desperation and the touch of the man who had destroyed my life roused all the wild-beast within me; I drew the life-preserver which I always carried from my pocket, and struck him a blow upon the head. He uttered a low cry and clutched at my beard; then I felt his hands relax, and with a groan he fell motionless at my feet. I was unconscious of the savage energy which had nerved my arm; I never dreamed, I swear to you, that I had more than stunned him. By the aid of the tree I regained Grainger's garden, re-entered the house without encountering any one, and, with no shadow of a thought upon my conscience that I had done a murder, went to bed and slept.

'My horror the next morning upon discovering the truth I cannot attempt to describe. Leaving an excuse for my friend, who had not yet returned, I fled the house like another Cain, took train to Liverpool, and secured a passage on board a steamer that departed

for America the next morning. No sooner, however, had I landed at New York, than I experienced an unaccountable desire to return to England. My rest was broken by weird dreams, in which I always saw a pale, beautiful, but stern face, that fixed its eyes upon mine. Ah! the torture that those eyes inflicted upon me; they seemed to burn into my brain, to exercise a resistless fascination, to draw my very soul towards them. How they terrified me by their relentless hate! then they held me spellbound by their unutterable yearning, that seemed to say, "Come to me, come to me; you are mine, and I am yours." I could not rest, I could not remain in any one place for any length of time. I quitted New York and went southward, and still the same irresistible impulse to return to England, still the same strange dreams, pursued me. I left America and came back to Europe; stayed for a time at Paris, then at Vienna, living how I could; but still the curse of Salathiel was upon me; fly whither I would, an inexorable destiny was driving me to the one spot—and to London I came at last.

'One of the first acquaintances that I encountered upon my arrival was Grainger. "Just the very sort of fellow I wanted to meet!" was his greeting. "I've got the blue-devils; come and stay with me a few days. It's no good to say no, for come you shall." Strange as it may seem, I was quite eager to accept his invitation, for now I was in London I had a craving desire to visit the scene of my crime. I never doubted but that it was a fatality that was drawing me on to my destruction, but I had no power to resist it. I arrived at Highgate on the 21st of June, two days before the awful anniversary. Grainger, in the course of conversation, brought up the subject of Arthur Blaquaire's mysterious death. He told me of the vow you had taken, of your strange vigils. "She's a lovely creature," he remarked; "it's a thousand pities; but there's no doubt that her brain is afflicted with monomania." I shuddered. "She is waiting for me, and I have come," was my inward comment.

'On the night of the 23rd, by a fatality—I cannot call it a coincidence—Grainger was summoned by telegram to the bed of a near relative who was dying, and I was left, as I had been on the same night two years previously, alone, with only the servants in the house. The human mind, more especially if it be morbidly excited, has a strange hankering after coincidences; it is equally eager to discover them and to bring them to pass. No sooner was Grainger gone than this kind of desire seized upon me; up to that time the coincidence was perfect, I could not resist completing it. Although, unlike the previous occasion, the night was miserably wet, I took out a chair upon the verandah, and lit a cigar; naturally, my eyes took the direction of your garden, and there, out



upon the gloom, I saw a faint glow of light just as I had seen it on that night two years before. At first it thrilled me with a superstitious dread, for I pictured the dead man sitting there ; but the next moment I said to myself, "It is she, waiting for me—and I must go." I descended the stairs, passed into the garden, and once more swung myself by the fruit-tree upon the wall. There I paused, for I saw a dark figure standing between me and the light that shone from the window, and the next moment I heard a shriek and a cry, and saw a shadow gliding, *ventre à terre*, through the darkness, and among the bushes, and you came rushing out in pursuit. I was not the only one who heard your cry, for Grainger's valet came out, and seeing me upon the wall asked what was the matter. Before I could reply, you had fallen to the ground ; I leaped over, and the servant followed me.

'I raised you in my arms and bore you into the room. As the rays of the lamp fell upon your beautiful face, white as marble, I recognised it as the same that had haunted me in my dreams ; and as your eyes opened, they fixed themselves upon mine with the same yearning look they had so often worn in the vision. I felt no shock, no sensation of fear ; on the contrary, a deep lethargic repose, such as we experience after active pain, descended upon me. The fight was over, my destiny was fulfilled, I had come to you ; I was yours body and soul. The man you saw at the window was doubtless a burglar, who, knowing the house to be untenanted, had come to attempt a robbery. But the true criminal was at his heels. Mildred, your yearning and your intense power of will had acted upon me wherever I went, and at last drew me irresistibly to your side ; but instead of repulsion it had created sympathy between us, instead of hatred it had created love. All the horror, all the consequences of my unnatural passion were patent to me, but I was powerless even to struggle against its overwhelming force. The terrible retribution I have so often dreaded has fallen upon me ; I shall never see you more, and my love for you can never die, never fade.'

Here the letter abruptly ends. About a month after the date it bears, a ship bound for Australia went down in the Bay of Biscay with every soul on board. Among the names of the passengers was that of Jocelyn Hilborough. A little while ago there died in a Catholic convent, within a few miles of London, a grey-haired nun, who was known as sister Agnes, but who in the outward world had once borne the name of Mildred Blaquaire.

H. BARTON BAKER.

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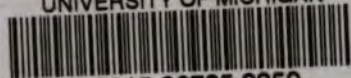
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